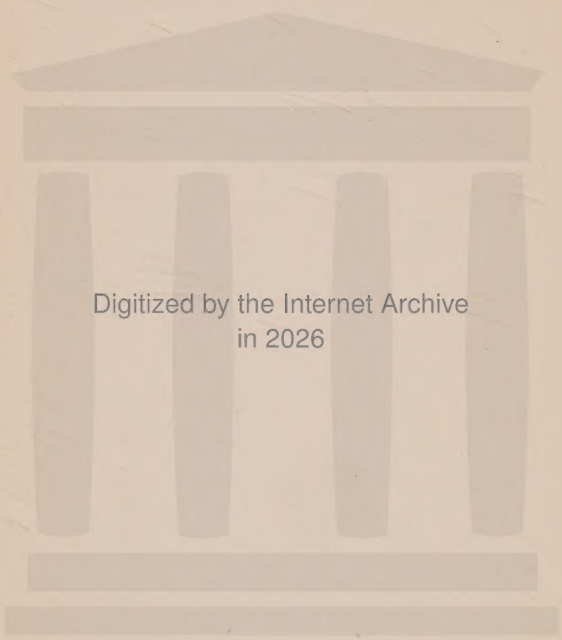
The Affair at the Inn

by

Kate Douglas Wiggin
Mary Findlater
Jane Findlater
Allan McAulay

K. Fullerton



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THE AFFAIR AT THE INN

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"Do you approve of marriage?" (page 92)

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An account of certain events which are supposed to have occurred in the month of May, 19—, at a quiet country inn on Dartmoor, in Devonshire; the events being recorded by the persons most interested in the unfolding of the little international comedy.

The story is written by four authors, each author being responsible for one character, as follows: —

Miss Virginia Pomeroy, of Richmond, Virginia, U. S. A., *by Kate Douglas Wiggin.*

Mrs. MacGill, of Tunbridge Wells, England, *by Mary Findlater*, author of "The Rose of Joy."

Miss Cecilia Evesham, Mrs. MacGill's English companion, *by Jane Helen Findlater*, author of "The Green Graves of Balgowrie."

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie, of Kindarroch, N. B., *by Allan McAulay*, author of "The Rhymer."

THE AFFAIR AT THE INN

I

Virginia Pomeroy

DARTMOOR, DEVONSHIRE
THE GREY TOR INN
Tuesday, May 18th, 19—

WHEN my poor father died five years ago, the doctor told my mother that she must have an entire change. We left America at once, and we have been travelling ever since, always in the British Isles, as the sound of foreign languages makes mamma more nervous. As a matter of fact, the doctor did not advise eternal change, but that is the interpretation mamma has placed upon his command, and so we are forever moving on, like What's-his-name in "Bleak House." It is not so extraordinary, then, that we are in the Devonshire moorlands, because one

cannot travel incessantly for four years in the British Isles without being everywhere, in course of time. That is what I said to a disagreeable, frumpy Englishwoman in the railway carriage yesterday.

"I have no fault to find with Great Britain," I said, "except that it is so circumscribed! I have outgrown my first feeling, which was a fear of falling off the edge; but I still have a sensation of being cabined, cribbed, confined."

She remarked that she had always preferred a small, perfectly finished, and well-managed estate to a large, rank, wild, and overgrown one, and I am bound to say that I think the retort was a good one. It must have been, for it silenced me.

We have done Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and having begun at the top of the map, have gone as far as Devon in England. We have been travelling by counties during the last year, because it seemed tidier and more thorough and businesslike; less con-

fusing too, for the places look so alike after a while that I can never remember where we have been without looking in my diary. I don't know what will come after England, — perhaps Australia and New Zealand. I suppose they speak English there, of a sort.

If complete ignorance of a place, combined with great power of appreciation when one is introduced to it, — if these constitute a favourable mental attitude, then I have achieved it. That Devonshire produces Lanes, Dumplings, Cider, Monoliths, Clouted Cream, and Moors I know, but all else in the way of knowledge or experience is to be the captive of my bow and spear.

It is one of the accidents of travel that one can never explain, our being here on this desolate moor, caged, with half a dozen strange people, in a little inn at the world's end.

In the hotel at Exeter mamma met in the drawing-room a certain Mrs. MacGill, who like herself was just recovering from the in-

fluenza. Our paths have crossed before; I hope they 'll not do so too often. Huddled in their shawls, and seated as near to the chilling hotel fire as was possible, they discussed their symptoms, while I read "Lorna Doone." Mrs. MacGill slept ill at night and found a glass of milk-arrowroot with a teaspoon of brandy and a Bath Oliver biscuit a panacea; mamma would not allow that any one could sleep worse than she, but recommended a peppermint lozenge, as being simple, convenient, and efficacious. Mrs. MacGill had a slight cough, so had mamma; Mrs. MacGill's chest was naturally weak, so was mamma's. Startlingly similar as were the paths by which they were travelling to the grave, they both looked in average health, mamma being only prettily delicate and Mrs. MacGill being fat and dumpy, with cap ribbons and shoulder capes and bugles and brooches that bespoke at least a languid interest in life. The nice English girl who was Mrs. MacGill's companion in the railway

train, sat in the background knitting and reading, — the kind of girl who ought to look young and does n't, because her youth has been feeding somebody's selfish old age. I could see her quiet history written all over her face, — her aged father, vicar of some remote parish; her weary mother, harassed with the cares of a large family; and the dull little vicarage from whose windows she had taken her narrow peeps at life. We exchanged glances at some of Mrs. MacGill's reminiscences, and I was grateful to see that she has a sense of humour. That will help her considerably if she is a paid companion, as I judge she is; one would hardly travel with Mrs. MacGill for pleasure. This lady at length crowded mamma to the wall and began on the details of an attack of brain fever from which she had suffered at the Bridge of Allan thirty years ago, and I left the room to seek a breath of fresh air.

There is never anything amusing going on in an English hotel. When I remember

the life one lives during a week at the Waldorf-Astoria or the Holland House in New York, it fairly makes me yearn with homesickness. It goes like this with a girl whose friends are all anxious to make the time pass merrily.

Monday noon: Luncheon at the University Club with H. L. and mamma.

Monday afternoon: Drive with G. P. in a hansom. Tea at Maillard's. Violets from A. B., American Beauty roses from C. D. waiting in my room. Dinner and the play arranged for me by E. F.

Tuesday: One love letter and one proposal by the morning mail; the proposal from a Harvard Freshman who wishes me to wait until he finishes his course. No one but a Freshman would ever have thought of that! G. H. from Chicago and B. C. from Richmond arrive early and join us at breakfast. B. C. thinks G. H. might have remained at home to good advantage. G. H. wonders why B. C. could n't have stayed where he

was less in the way. Luncheon party given by G. H. at one. Dinner by B. C. at seven.

Wednesday: Last fitting for three lovely dresses.

Thursday: Wear them all. The result of one of them attention with intention from the fastidious A. B.

And so on. It would doubtless spoil one in time, but I have only had two weeks of it, all put together.

The hall of the hotel at Exeter was like all other English hotel halls; so damp, dismal, dull, and dreary, that it is a wonder English travellers are not all sleeping in suicides' graves. Were my eyes deceiving me or was there a motor at the door, and still more wonderful, was there a young, good-looking man directly in my path, — a healthy young man with no symptoms, a well-to-do young man with a perfectly appointed motor, a well-bred, presentable young man with an air of the world about him?

How my heart, starving for amusement, rushed out to him after these last weary months of nursing at Leamington! I did n't want to marry him, of course, but I wanted to talk to him; to ride in his motor; to have him, in short, for a masculine safety valve. He showed no symptom of requiring me for any purpose whatever. That is the trouble with the men over here, — so oblivious, so rigid, so frigid, so conventional; so afraid of being chloroformed and led unconscious to the altar! He was smoking a pipe, and he looked at me in a vague sort of way. I confess I don't like to be looked at vaguely, and I am not accustomed to it. He could n't know that, of course, but I should like to teach him if only I had the chance and time. I don't suppose he knew that I was wearing a Redfern gown and hat, but the consciousness supported me in the casual encounter. Naturally he could not seek an introduction to me in a hotel hall, nor could we speak to each other without one.

His chauffeur went up to him presently, touched his hat, and I thought he said, "Quite ready, Sir — Something;" I did n't catch the name.

Well, he bowled off, and I comforted myself with the thought that mamma and I were at least on our way to pastures new, if they were only Dawlish or Torquay pastures; or perhaps something bracing in the shape of Dartmoor forests, if mamma listens to Mrs. MacGill.

The owner of the motor appeared again at our dinner table, a long affair set in the middle of the room, all the small tables being occupied by uninteresting nobodies who ate and drank as much, and took up as much room, as if they had been somebodies.

It is needless to say that the young Britisher did not, like the busy bee, improve the shining hour — that sort of bee does n't know honey when he sees it. He did n't even pass me the salt, which in a Christian country is not considered a compromising

attention. I think hat too many of Great Britain's young men must have been killed off in South Africa, and those remaining have risen to an altogether fictitious value. I suppose this Sir Somebody thinks my eyes are fixed on his coronet, if he has one rusting in his upper drawer awaiting its supreme moment of presentation. He is mistaken; I am thinking only of his motor. Heigh ho! If marriage as an institution could be retained, and all thought of marriage banished from the minds of the young of both sexes, how delightful society could be made for all parties! I can see that such a state of things would be quite impossible, but it presents many advantages.

Mrs. MacGill

EXETER, DEVONSHIRE
ROUGEMONT CASTLE HOTEL
Sunday, May 16th, 19—

I HAVE made out my journey from Tunbridge Wells in safety, although there has been a break-down upon the Scotch Express, which is a cause of thankfulness. There were two American women in the same carriage part of the time. The mother was, like myself, an invalid, and the daughter I suppose would be considered pretty. She was not exactly painted, but must have done something to her skin, I think, probably prejudicial like the advertisements; it was really waxen, and her hair decidedly dark — and such a veil! It reminded me of the expression about "power on the head" in Corinthians — not that she seemed to require it, for she rang no less than eight times for the guard, each time about some different whim-

sey. The boy only grinned, yet he was quite rude to me when I asked him, only for the second time, where we changed carriages next. Cecilia spoke a good deal to the girl, who made her laugh constantly, in spite of her neuralgia, which was very inconsistent and provoking to me, as she had not uttered a word for hours after we left Tunbridge Wells. The mother seemed a very delicate, sensible person, suffering from exactly the same form of influenza as myself — indeed many of our symptoms are identical. They happened to be going to this hotel, too, so we met again in the afternoon. I had a bad night. Exeter is small, but the Cathedral chimes are very tiresome; they kept me awake as if on purpose; Cecilia slept, as neuralgic people seem often able to do.

Somehow I do not fancy the idea of Dartmoor at all. It may brace Cecilia, but it will be too cold for me, I 'm sure. I must send for my black velvet mantle — the one with the beads at the neck, as it will be the very

thing for the moor. At present I have nothing quite suitable to wear. There is a great deal of skirt about Americans, I see. Even the mother rustled; all silk, yet the dresses on the top were plain enough. As I had nothing to read in the train, I bought a sixpenny copy of a book called "The Forest Lovers," but could not get on with it at all, and what I did make out seemed scarcely proper, so I took up a novel which Mrs. Pomeroy (the American) lent me, by a man with a curious Scriptural name — something like Phillpotts. It was entirely about Dartmoor, and gave a most alarming account of the scenery and inhabitants. I'm sure I hope we shall be safe at Grey Tor Inn. Some of the wilder parts must be quite dangerous — storms — wild cattle roaming about, and Tors everywhere.

. . . . . .

Mrs. MacGill

DARTMOOR, DEVONSHIRE
THE GREY TOR INN
Tuesday, May 18th, 19—

I WISH I had brought winter flannels with me. It is all very well to call it the middle of May on Dartmoor, but it is as cold as the middle of winter in Aberdeen. There may be something odd about the red soil that accounts for flowers coming out in spite of it, for certainly there are primroses and violets on the banks, a good many, — very like flowers in a hat.

We met Miss Pomeroy, the American girl, in the lobby of the hotel. She said that her mother was resting in the drawing-room. Like me, she seems to suffer from shivering fits. "I can't imagine," I said, "why any doctor should have ordered me to such a place as this to recover from influenza, which is just another form of cold." The windows look straight out on Grey Tor. It is, of course, as

the guide-books say, "a scene of great sublimity and grandeur," but very dreary; it is not mountain, and not what we would call moor, either, in Scotland — just a crumpled country, with boulders here and there. Grey Tor is the highest point we can see — not very lonely, I am glad to say, for little black people are always walking up and down it, like flies on a confectioner's window, and there is a railing on the top.

There is a young man here, who, I was surprised to find, is a nephew of the uncle of my poor brother-in-law, Colonel Forsyth, who died in a moment at Agra. Sir William Maxwell Mackenzie used to be often at the Forsyths, before his death. This young man's name is Archibald, and he drives a motor. I sat next him at dinner, and we had quite a pleasant little chat about my poor brother-in-law's sudden death and funeral. Miss Pomeroy ate everything on the table and talked a great deal. Cecilia said she wasn't able to come down to dinner, but, as usual, ate more

than I could, upstairs. Like me, Mrs. Pomeroy finds the Devonshire cream very heavy. The daughter and Sir Archibald finished nearly the whole dish, although it was a large china basin.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie, Bart.

Grey Tor Inn

I MUST get away from these women at all costs. People may say what they like, but there 's no question that nothing is more destructive to comfort than the society of ladies. A man cannot smoke, nor wear the clothes nor use the language that he wants to when they are present, — so what is the use of pretending, as some fellows do, that they add to the pleasantness of life? I certainly thought that by coming to these out-of-the-way parts in the motor, with no one but my servant, I should be free of the women; but no such luck! In the hotel at Exeter there was a batch of them, — some Americans, of course, particularly a girl, so deuced lively she could not be ignored. I dislike the whole girl-tribe with all my

heart, and I dislike the kittenish ones most: they 're a positive pest.

This is a rum sort of country, — a sort of inferior Scotland, I should call it; but if you were to say that to the artist chaps and writing fellows you meet about here, they would murder you. There is a lot of rot talked about everything in this world, but there 's more and worse rot talked about scenery than anything else. For instance, people will yarn away about "the blue Mediterranean," but it 's not a bit bluer than any other sea, — the English Channel, for example; any sea will be blue if the sky is blue. I suppose it earns somebody's living to talk and write all this sort of stuff, and get idiots to believe it. Here they are always jawing away about "giant monoliths" and wonderful colossal stone-formations on the moor, till you really think there 's something rather fine to be seen. And what are the giant monoliths? Two or three ordinary sorts of stones set up on end on a mound! What rot!

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after-breakfast pipe, a thing w
out of temper for the day. Howe
Pomeroy said she liked smoke, so there
a kind of mitigation in the boredom which
I felt was before me.

Grey Tor, as the guide-books call it, is just above the hotel, a sort of knob of rock that is thought a lot of in these parts. (We make road metal of the same kind of thing in Scotland; I'd like to tell the chaps that who write all the drivel about Dartmoor).

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soon she had breath enough to
. The subject of names came up, I for-
get for what reason.

"I like your kind of name," Miss Pomeroy was good enough to say. "I call it downright sensible and clear, for it tells what you're called, and gives your background immediately, don't you see? Now you could n't tell what my Christian name is without asking — could you?"

"No, I could n't," I agreed, and was silent. I 'm no hand at small talk. She gave me rather a funny look out of her black eyes, but I took no notice. She seemed to want to laugh — I don't know why ; there 's nothing funny on Dartmoor that *I* can see. We got on to the Tor presently, and nothing would satisfy a woman, naturally, but climbing all over the beastly thing. She had to be helped up and down, of course. Her hands are very white and slim ; they were not at all hot, I am glad to say, as she wore no gloves, and I had to clutch them so often. There was a very high wind up there, and I 'm blessed if her hair did n't come down and blow about. It only made her laugh, but I considered it would be indecent to walk back to the hotel with a woman in such a dishevelled state.

"I will pick up the hairpins," I said seriously, "if you will — will do the rest." She laughed and put up her arms to her head, but brought them down with a flop.

"I 'm afraid my waist is too tight in the

sleeves for me to do my hair up here; it 'll have to wait till I get down to the hotel," she said gaily. I suppose she meant that she tight-laced, though I could n't see how her waist could be tight in the sleeves. I was quite determined she should not walk to the hotel in my company with her hair in that state.

"I will stick these in," I said firmly, indicating the hairpins, of which I had picked up about a bushel, "if you will do the rolling up." It got done somehow, and I stuck in the pins. I never touched a woman's hair before; how beastly it must be to have all that on one's head — unhealthy, too. I dare say it accounts for the feebleness of women's brains. Miss Pomeroy's cheeks got pinker and pinker during this operation — a sort of rush of blood, I suppose; it is all right as long as it does not go to the nose. She is not a bad-looking girl, certainly.

We got back to the hotel without any further disagreeables.

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"I WILL STICK THESE IN . . . IF YOU WILL DO THE ROLLING UP"

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of a time if you do!"
fluenza, like Mrs. Pome-

roy," announced Mrs. MacGill solemnly, "but if Miss Evesham wishes some fresh air she can go out at any time. I'm sure I never object to anything that you choose to do, Cecilia, do I?"

I hastened to assure her that she did not, while the American girl stood looking from one of us to the other with her bright, clever eyes.

"Suppose you come down to the hall door with me then, Miss Evesham," Miss Pomeroy suggested, "and we'll taste the air."

"Shall I, Mrs. MacGill?" I asked, for a companion must always ask leave even to breathe. Mrs. MacGill answered petulantly that of course I might do as I liked.

The motor stood alone and unattended by the front door, both owner and chauffeur having deserted it. It rested there like a red-hot panting monster fatigued by climbing the long hill that leads up to Grey Tor Inn.

"Is n't it out of breath?" cried Virginia. "I want to pat it and give it a drink of

water." The next minute she skipped into the car and laid her white hand on the steering-wheel.

"Oh, don't! Do take care!" I cried. "The thing may run away with you, or burst, or something, and the owner may come out at any moment — it belongs to that young man who was at Exeter, Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie."

"I should like it very much if he did come out," said Virginia, looking over her shoulder at me with the most bewitching ogle I ever saw, and I soon saw that she intended to conquer Sir Archibald as she had conquered many another man, and meant to drive all over Dartmoor in his motor. Well, youth and high spirits are two good things. Let her do what she likes with the young man, so long as she enjoys herself; they will both be old soon enough!

II

Virginia Pomeroy

Dartmoor, Devonshire
Grey Tor Inn

The plot thickens; well, goodness knows it was thin enough before, and it is now only of the innocent consistency of cream sauce. For myself I like a plot that will stand quite stiff and firm; still the Exeter motor is here and the Exeter motor-man is here. I don't mean the chauffeur, but the owner. He does n't intend staying more than a day or two, but he may like it better as time goes on, — they often do, even these British icebergs. It is, however, a poor climate for thawing purposes. There are only six people in the inn all told, and two, we hear, are leaving to-night.

I was glad to see the English girl standing at the window when we arrived. She brightened, as much as to say that we two might

make life more cheerful by putting our heads together. Mrs. MacGill is a good companion for mamma, but could not otherwise be endured for a moment. I find it very difficult to account for her on any ordinary basis; I mean of climate or nationality or the like. The only way I can explain her to my satisfaction is, that some sixty years ago her father, a very dull gentleman, met her mother, a lady of feeble mind and waspish disposition; met her, loved her, married her, — and Mrs. MacGill is the result of the union.

Her conversation at table is aimless beyond description, often causing Miss Evesham to blush, and Sir Archibald to raise his eyebrows. It does n't take much to produce this effect on Sir Archibald's part; when he was born they must have been slightly lifted.

Mrs. MacGill asked me, at dinner, my Christian name, not having heard it, as mamma often calls me "Jinny." Here is the colloquy.

Jinny: My name is Virginia; it is one of the Southern States, you know.

Mrs. Mac: Oh, I see! how curious! Is that a common habit of naming children in America?

Jinny: Oh, yes; you see it is such an enormous country, and there are such a number of children to be named that we simply had to extend the supply of names in some way. My mother's middle name, which is my own also, is something really quaint, — "Secessia."

Mrs. Mac: Secessia! What an extraordinary name! Has it any significance?

Jinny: Yes, indeedy! My mother was born in the early days of the Civil War, at the time of the secession, and her father, an ardent Southerner, named her Gloria Secessia.

Mrs. Mac: Let me see, I don't seem to remember any secession; were we mixed up in what you call your Civil War?

(Here Sir Archibald caught my eye and smiled, almost a human smile it was.)

Jinny: No, but you had a good deal to do with the War of Independence. That was nearly a century before. (Sir Archibald was honestly amused here. He must know American history.)

Mrs. Mac: I thought your last war was called the War of Independence, because it made the negroes independent, but I must have got the two confused; and you 've just had another small one, have n't you, though now I remember that we were engaged in only one of them, and that was before my time. It seems strange we should have gone across the ocean to help a younger country to fight its battles, but after all, blood is thicker than water. I had a nephew who went to America — Brazil I think was the name of the town — a barrister, Mr. George Forsyth; you may have met him?

Jinny: I think not; I seldom go so far from home.

Mrs. Mac: But you live in South America, do you not?

Jinny: I live in the South, but that is merely to say in the southern part of the United States.

Mrs. Mac: How confusing! I fear I can't make it out without the globes; I was always very good at the globes when I was a child. Cecilia, suppose after dinner you see if there is a globe in the inn.

Poor Miss Evesham! She is so pale, so likable, so downtrodden, and she has been so pretty! Think of what is involved when one uses the past tense with a woman of thirty. She has fine hair and eyes and a sweet manner. As to the rest, she is about my height, and she is not dressed; she is simply clothed. Height is her only visible dimension, the village mantua-maker having shrouded the others in hopeless ambiguity. She has confessed to me that she dresses on fifteen pounds a year! If she had told me that her father was dead, her mother a kleptomaniac, and she the sole support of a large family, I should have pitied her, but a dress

allowance of fifteen pounds a year calls for more than pity; it belongs to the realm of tragedy. She looks at thirty as if she never had had, nor ever expected to have, a good time. How I should like to brighten her up a bit and get her into my room to try on Paris hats!

She and I, aided by Sir Archibald, have been to Stoke Babbage to try to secure a pony, sound, kind, and fleet, that will drag Mrs. MacGill up and down the hills. She refused the steeds proffered by the Grey Tor stables, and sent Miss Evesham to procure something so hopelessly ideal in the shape of horseflesh that I confess we had no expectation of ever finding it.

The groom at the Unicorn produced a nice pony chaise, well padded and well braked, with small low wheels, and a pony originally black, but worn gray by age, as well as by battling with the elements in this region of bare hills and bleak winds. Miss Evesham liked its looks particularly. I too

was pleased by its sturdy build and remarked that its somewhat wild eye might be only a sign of ambition. Sir Archibald took an entirely humourous view of the animal, and indeed, as compared with a motor, the little creature seemed somewhat inadequate. We agreed that for Mrs. MacGill (and here we exchanged wicked glances) it would do admirably, and we all became better acquainted in discussing its points.

Miss Evesham and I offered to drive the pony back to Grey Tor, and Sir Archibald saw us depart with something that approached hilarity. He is awfully nice when he unbends in this way, and quite makes one wish to see him do it oftener. From all our previous conversations I have come away with the sort of feeling you have when you visit the grave of your grandmother on a Sunday afternoon.

I don't know the number of miles between Stoke Babbage and Grey Tor. The distance covered cuts no actual figure in describing the time required for a drive with the new

pony, whom I have christened Greytoria. The word "drive" is not altogether descriptive, since we walked most of the way home. I hardly think this method of progression would have occurred to us, but it did occur to Greytoria, and she communicated the idea by stopping short at the slightest elevation and turning her head in a manner which could only mean, "Suppose you get out if you don't mind!"

Having walked up all the hills we imagined we could perhaps drive down. Not at all. Greytoria dislikes holding back more, if anything, than climbing up. We kept our seats at first, applied the brake, and attempted a very gentle trot. "Don't let us spoil the pony," I said. "We must begin as we mean to go on." Miss Evesham agreed, but in a moment or two each issued from her side of the chaise and that without argument. Greytoria's supports are both stiff and weak — groggy is Sir Archibald's word. She takes trembling little steps with her forelegs while

the hind ones slide automatically down any declivity. The hills between Stoke Babbage and Grey Tor being particularly long and steep, we found that I was obliged to lead Greytoria by the bridle while Miss Evesham held the chaise by the back of the seat and attempted to keep it from falling on the pony's legs; the thing, we finally discovered, that was the ruling terror of her life.

Naturally we were late at luncheon, but we did not describe our drive in detail. The groom at the stables says that the pony can drag Mrs. MacGill quite safely, if Miss Evesham is firm in her management. Of course she will have to walk up and down all the hills, but she does n't mind that, and Mrs. MacGill will love it. It is bliss to her to lie in slippered ease, so to speak, and see all the people in her vicinity working like galley slaves. We shall be delightfully situated now, with Greytoria, Sir Archibald's motor, and an occasional trap from the stables, if we need other vehicles.

Sir Archibald as yet does not look upon a motor as a philanthropic institution. There are moments when he seems simply to regard it as a means of selfish pleasure, but that must be changed.

Item. Miss Evesham looked only twenty-nine at luncheon.

Mrs. MacGill

Last night I slept so badly that I could not go down to the dining-room this morning. Cecilia, in spite of her neuralgia yesterday, seemed well and bright. I asked her to send me up some breakfast, but could scarcely eat it when it came; the tea was cold, the bread damp and tough, and the egg fresh enough, but curious. Cecilia never came near me after breakfast. When I came down about eleven o'clock, very cold, I found no one in the sitting-rooms. Hearing voices, I went to the door and found Cecilia talking to the American girl, who had a great deal of colour for that hour in the morning. Sir Archibald came up, grinding round the drive in his motor. It is quite unnecessary to have brought a motor here at all, for I observe that the hillsides are covered with ponies. There must have been a herd of twenty-five of them outside my

window this morning, so a motor is quite out of place. The doctor here recommends me to try driving exercise, but some of the animals are so very small that I scarcely think they could pull me up these hills. Cecilia says the smaller ones are foals. Many of them kick, I see, so we must select with care. I wish we could procure a donkey. The feeling of confidence I have when in a donkey-chair more than makes up for the slowness of motion.

Like me, Mrs. Pomeroy was kept awake by the wind — it never stops here. When I remarked on this, Cecilia said in her patronising way, "Don't you remember Borrow's famous line, —

"There 's always the wind on the heath"?

"I see nothing clever in that," I said; "there *is* always wind on the heath here, and I particularly dislike it."

When we came into the drawing-room Miss Pomeroy was saying, "I 've discovered

a piano!" The piano, to my mind, was the largest object in the room, so she must be short-sighted, if she had not seen it before; pride probably prevents her wearing glasses. She sat there singing for quite a long time. She would n't finish her songs, but just sang scraps of a number of things. Sir Archibald came into the room and stood about for some time. I asked him several questions about his father's sister, whom I used to know. He replied so absently that I could make nothing of it. Miss Pomeroy has a clear voice. She sang what I suppose were translations of negro songs — very noisy. When she afterwards tried one of Moore's exquisite melodies, I confess to admiring it. It was a great favourite with Mr. MacGill, who used to sing it with much feeling: —

Around the dear ruin, each wish of my heart.

What a touching expression that is for a middle-aged woman — "the dear ruin"!

Grey Tor is certainly very bleak. The

guide-books speak of "huge monoliths" (I suppose they mean the rocks on the moor), "seeming to have been reared by some awful cataclysm of nature in primordial times." I hope there will be no cataclysms during our stay on the moor; the accounts of tempests of which I read in some of the novels quite frighten me, yet I can scarcely think there is much danger about this tor — "a giant, the biggest tor of all," the guide-books say. It is so fully peopled by tourists with luncheon baskets that one loses the feeling of desolation. Miss Pomeroy has been up to the top already — twice, once alone. Cecilia means to go too, though nothing can be worse for neuralgia than cold wind. She will always say that nothing hurts her like sitting in hot rooms. I should be very glad to have a hot room to sit in! She has got a nice, quiet-looking animal at last, and a low pony chaise, so I hope to have some drives.

Neuralgia is one of those things one cannot calculate on. Cecilia will be ill all day,

and then suddenly able to come down to dinner. I have suffered a good deal from tic douloureux myself, but was never able to eat during the paroxsyms, as Cecilia seems to be. After having five teeth pulled, I once lived exclusively on soup for three days.

Miss Pomeroy, I suppose, is what most people would call a pretty girl. Hot bread and dyspepsia will soon do for her, though, as for all American women. The bread here is tough and very damp. She is dark, very dark in hair and eyes, in spite of her white skin, and she describes herself as a "Southerner." I should be inclined to suspect a strain of negro or Indian blood. I heard her discussing what she called "the colour problem" with Cecilia, and she seemed to speak with a good deal of bitterness. Yet Mrs. Pomeroy is evidently a lady. The girl dresses well in the American style, which I never attempt. She has, I suppose, what would be called a fine figure, though the waist seems of no importance just now. Her feet, in

shoes, look small enough, though the heels she wears astonish me; it is years since I have worn anything but a simple cloth boot, neat but roomy. I have seen her glance at my feet several times, as if she observed something odd about them.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie.

Grey Tor Inn

Is n't it a most extraordinary thing that when people are in a comfortable house, with a good roof over their heads, solid meals served at regular intervals three or four times a day, and every possible comfort, they instantly want to go outside and make themselves not only thoroughly uncomfortable, but generally ill besides, by having a picnic in the open? Ever since I had that walk with Miss Pomeroy, she has done nothing but talk about a picnic at some beastly little village in the vicinity where there is a church that the guide-books tell the usual lies about. As to churches — a church to my mind is a place to go to on Sundays with the rest of the congregation. It is plainly not constructed for week days, when it is empty, cold, and damp, and you

have to take your hat off in the draughts all the same, and talk in whispers. As to picnics — there 's a kind of folly about *them* that it is altogether beyond me to understand. Why such things ever take place outside the grounds of a lunatic asylum, goodness only knows; they ought to be forbidden by law, and the people who organize them shut up as dangerous. However, I see I am in for this one. Miss Pomeroy wants the motor, but she won't get the motor without me. Heaven be praised, the weather has broken up in the mean time, which is the reason I am staying on here. Motoring on Dartmoor in a tearing nor'easter is no catch. My quarters are comfortable, and but for the women I should be doing very well.

The worst of it is, there is a whole batch of them now. A Mrs. MacGill and her companion are here, and these two and the Americans seem to have met before. The two old women are as thick as thieves, and the fair Virginia (she told me her name,

though she might have seen, I am sure, that I was simply dying not to know it) seems to have a good deal to say to the companion, though the latter does n't appear to me much in the line of such a lively young person. There 's no rule, of course, for women's likes and dislikes, any more than for anything else that has to do with them. The unlucky part of it is that Mrs. MacGill seemed to spot me the moment she heard my name. She says my father was her brother-in-law's first cousin, and her brother-in-law died at Agra in a fit; though what that has to do with it, goodness knows. It means I have got to be civil and to get mixed up with the rest of the party. A man can never be as rude as he feels, which is one of the drawbacks of civilization. So I have to sit at their table now, and talk the whole time — can't even have a meal in peace. The old woman MacGill is on one side, the American girl on the other. The companion sits opposite. *She* keeps quiet, which is one

mercy; generally has neuralgia, — a pale, rather ladylike young woman with a seen-better-days-and-once-was-decidedly-pretty air about her. The American girl's clothes take the cake, of course — a new frock every night and such ribbons and laces — my stars! I 'd rather not be the man who has to pay for them. I 'm surprised at her talking so much to the humble companion — thought this sort of girl never found it worth while to be civil to her own sex; but I conclude this is not invariably the case.

"I 'm afraid your neuralgia is very bad up here," I heard her say to Miss Evesham (that 's the companion's name) after dinner last night. "You come right along to my room, and I 'll rub menthol on your poor temples." And they went off together and disappeared for the night.

The weather has cleared up to-day, though it is still too cold and windy, thank the Lord, for the picnic to Widdington-in-the-Wolds. I took the motor to a little town about four

miles off, and overtook the fair Virginia and Miss Evesham, footing it there on some errand of Mrs. MacGill's. I slowed down as I got near, but I soon saw Miss Pomeroy intended me to stop; there 's no uncertainty about any of *her* desires.

"Now, Sir Archibald," said she with a straight look which made me understand that obedience was my rôle, "I know what you 're going to do this very minute. Miss Evesham 's neuralgia is so bad that she can scarcely see, and you 've got to take her right along in your motor to the Unicorn Inn, and help choose a pony for Mrs. MacGill. Just a man's job — you 'd love doing it, I should think."

I wanted to hum and haw a bit, but she did n't give me the chance. She pulled open the door behind. "Get in quick!" she said to the companion. "Quick, quick! a motor puff-puffing this way always makes me think it 's in a desperate hurry and won't wait!"

I, however, was not in such a hurry this time, though there 's nothing I hate more, as a rule, than wasting motor power standing still.

"What are *you* going to do, Miss Pomeroy?" I shouted above the throbbing and shaking of the machine.

"Going right home to my mother," she replied. "It 's about time, too."

"No, you don't," thought I, "and leave me saddled with the companion." For if you *must* have female society, you may as well have it good-looking when you are about it.

"Won't you do me the pleasure of taking a ride too?" I asked politely. I knew perfectly well she was dying for a ride in the motor, and I had turned a deaf ear to dozens of hints. But now that she wanted to do the other woman a good turn and walk home herself, nothing would content me but to have her in the motor. I know how inconvenient it is to be good-natured

and unselfish. I am obliged to be both so often, against my natural inclinations.

Miss Virginia's eyes gave a sparkle, but she hesitated a moment.

"The front seat's much the jolliest," I remarked, "and it's very good going — no end of a surface." She gave a jump and was up beside me in half a second, and we were off.

By Jove — that was a good bit of going! The road was clear, the surface like velvet. I took every bit out of the motor that was in it, and we went the pace and no mistake. Miss Virginia was as pleased as Punch, I could see. She had to hold on her hat with both hands, and her cheeks and lips were as red as roses; the ribbons flew out from her neck, and flapped across my face, which was a nuisance, of course; they had the faint scent of some flower or other; I hate smells as a rule, but this was not strong enough to be bad. We got down at the Unicorn, and though I said I knew nothing whatever about

ponies, I had to look through the stables with the hostler, and choose a beast and a trap for Mrs. MacGill. There was only one of each, so the choice was not difficult. The two girls drove home in the turnout. I thought it was time to disappear.

Cecilia Evesham

GREY TOR INN

Thursday

I HAVE had a miserable thirty-six hours. Mrs. MacGill has been ill again — or has believed that she is ill again. I do not think there is much wrong with her, but the oversympathetic Mrs. Pomeroy went on describing symptoms to her till she became quite nervous and went to bed, demanding that a doctor be sent for. This was no easy matter, but at last a callow medical fledgling was dug out somewhere, who was ready to agree with all I said to him.

"Suggest fresh air and exercise to Mrs. MacGill," I said, "for she considers the one poisonous, the other almost a crime, and knitting the only legitimate form of amusement."

So he recommended air and exercise — driving exercise by preference.

"I used to like the donkey-chairs at Tunbridge Wells," Mrs. MacGill responded, "but horses go so rapidly."

However, after the doctor had gone she began to consider his advice.

"Shall I go to the stables and arrange for you to have a drive this afternoon?" I asked.

She demurred, for she never can make up her mind about anything.

"I can't decide just now," she hesitated. "I'll think it over."

I took up the guide-book, and was allowed to read its thrilling pages for some ten minutes. Then Mrs. MacGill called me again.

"Perhaps if you go and select a *very* quiet horse we might have a drive in the afternoon," she said.

I went and saw the horse, and arranged for the drive, then returned to tell Mrs. MacGill of the arrangement. She was not

pleased. Had I said that *perhaps* we would drive out at three o'clock, it would have been more to her mind.

"Go back and tell the man that perhaps we 'll go," she said.

"But perhaps some one else will take out the horse, in that case," I suggested, cross and weary with her fidgeting. All the rest of the forenoon was one long vacillation: she would go, or she would not go; it would rain, or it would not rain; she would countermand the carriage or she would order it. But by three o'clock the sun was shining, so I got her bonneted and cloaked and led her down to the hall. The motor had come round at the same moment with our carriage. Its owner was looking it over before he made a start, and I was not surprised to see that Miss Virginia Pomeroy was also at the door, and that she showed great interest in the tires of the motor. Had I been that young man I must have asked her to drive with me there and then, she looked so delightful;

but he is rather a phlegmatic creature, surely, for he did n't seem to think of it. Just as we were preparing to step into the carriage, the motor gave out a great puff of steam, and the horse in our vehicle sprang up in the shafts and took a shy to one side. It was easily quieted down, but of course the incident was more than enough for Mrs. MacGill.

"Take it away," she said to the driver. "I won't endanger my life with such an animal — brown horses are always wild, and so are black ones."

It was vain for me to argue; she just turned away and walked upstairs again, I following to take off her bonnet and cloak, and supply her again with her knitting. So there was an end of the carriage exercise, it seemed.

But there 's a curious boring pertinacity in the creature, for after we had sat in silence for about ten minutes she remarked: —

"Cecilia, the doctor *said* I was to have

carriage exercise. Don't you think I could get a donkey-chair?"

"No," I replied quite curtly. "Donkey chairs do not grow on Dartmoor."

She never saw that I was provoked, and perhaps it was just as well.

"No," she said after a pause for reflection. "No, I dare say they do not, but don't you think if you walked to Stoke Babbage you might be able to get one for me?"

"I might be able to get a pony chaise and a quiet pony," I answered, scenting the possibility of a five-mile walk that would give me an hour or two of peace.

"Well, will you go and try if you can get one?" she asked.

"If you don't mind being left alone for a few hours, I 'll do what I can," I said. She was beginning to object, when Virginia appeared, leading in her mother.

"Here 's my mother come to keep you company, Mrs. MacGill," she explained. "She wishes to hear all about your chill, from

the first shiver right on to the last cough." She placed Mrs. Pomeroy in an armchair, and fairly drove me out of the room before her, pushing me with both hands.

"Come! Run! Fly! Escape!" she cried. "You are as white as butter with waiting on that woman's fads. I won't let you come in again under three hours. My mother's symptoms are good to last for two and a half hours, and then Mrs. MacGill can fill up the rest of the time with hers."

Gaiety like Virginia's is infectious. I ran, yes, really ran downstairs along with her, quite forgetting my headache and weariness. I almost turned traitor to Mrs. MacGill and was ready to laugh at her with this girl.

"She wants a pony chaise, and I 'm to go down to Stoke Babbage to choose it," I said.

"Why, that 's five miles away, is n't it?" she asked. "You 're not half equal to a walk like that."

"Anything — anything for a respite from Mrs. MacGill!" I cried.

"Well, if you are fit for it, I reckon I am," Virginia said, and with that we set off together down the road. . . .

III

Virginia Pomeroy

GREY TOR INN

THE inn at the world's end. The inn at the world's end. These words come into my mind every morning when I look out of my window at the barren moor with its clumps of blazing whin, the misty distance, and the outline of Grey Tor against the sky. That "giant among rocks rising in sombre and sinister majesty athwart the blue" looks to my eye like an interesting stone on a nice, middle-sized hill. If only they would dwell more upon the strange sense of desolation and mystery it seems to put into the landscape, instead of being awed by its so-called size! I am fascinated by it, but refuse to be astounded.

This naughty conception of the colossus of the moor is the one link between Sir

Archibald and me, for he has seen Ben Nevis and I the Yosemite Crags. Geologically speaking I admit that these moor rocks must be fascinating to the student, and certainly we at home are painfully destitute of "clapper-bridges," "hut-circles," and "monoliths;" although I heard an imaginative fellow countryman declare yesterday to a party of English trippers that we had so many we became tired to death of the sight of them, and the government ordered hundreds of them pulled down.

Every inn, even one at the world's end, is a little picture of life, and we have under our roof all sorts of dramas in process of unfolding.

Shall I always be travelling, I wonder, picking up acquaintances here and there, sometimes friends, now and then a lover perhaps! Imagine a hotel lover, a lodging-house suitor, a husband, whom one would remember afterwards was rented with an apartment! But if I had found only Cecilia Eve-

sham in this bleak spot I could be thankful for coming. She is like a white thorn-bush in a barren field, and she is not plain either, as they all persist in thinking her. Life, Mrs. MacGill, and the village dressmaker have for the moment placed her under a total eclipse, but she will shine yet, this poor little sunny beam, all put out of countenance by fierce lights and heavy shadows. To-day is her birthday, and mamma, who has taken a great fancy to her, gave her a long, wide scarf of creamy tambour lace. I presented a little violet brooch and belt-buckle of purple enamel, and by hard labor extracted from Mrs. MacGill a hideous little jug of Aller Vale pottery with "Think of Me" printed on it. Think of her, indeed! One can always do that without having one's memory jogged, or jugged. Sir Archibald joined in the affair most amiably and offered a red-bound Dartmoor Guide which he chanced to have with him. When we made our little gifts and I draped Miss Evesham in her tambour scarf, she looked only twenty-seven and

a half by the clock! I wanted to put a flower in her hair, but she shook her head, saying, "Roses are for young and lovely people like you, Virginia, who have other roses to match in their cheeks." I was pleased that Sir Archibald was so friendly about the simple birthday festivities. I can forgive being snubbed a little myself, or if not exactly snubbed, treated as a mysterious (and inferior) being from another planet; but if he had been condescending or disagreeable with Miss Evesham I should have hated him. As it is I am quite grateful for him as a distinct addition to our dull feminine party. He is a new type to me, I confess it, and I had not till to-day made much headway in understanding him. When a man has positively no shallows one always credits him (I dare say falsely) with immeasurable depths. His unlikeness to all the men I 've known increases his charm. He seems to attach such undue importance to small attentions, as if they meant not only a loss of dignity to the man, but an un-

wise feeding of the woman's vanity as well. He gave me the Black Watch ribbon for my banjo with as much inward hesitation and fear as Breck Calhoun would feel in asking me to share his future on nothing a year. He did n't grudge the ribbon, not he! but he was awfully afraid it might prove too encouraging a symptom for me to bear humbly and modestly.

Then that little affair of yesterday — was there ever anything more characteristic or more unexpected! I am certain he followed me into the lane for a walk, and would have joined me if Madam Spoil-Sport had not been my companion. Then came the stampede of the hill ponies, which may or may not have been a frightful and dangerous episode. I can only say it seemed so terrifying that I should have fainted if I had n't been so surprised at Sir Archibald's behaviour; and I 'm not at all a fainting sort of person, either.

Mrs. MacGill never looked more shapeless

and stupid, and having been uncommonly selfish and peevish that day, was even less worth preserving than usual. I don't know what the etiquette is in regard to life-saving. No doubt the (worthy) aged should always have the first chance, but in any event I should think a man would evince some slight regret at seeing a young and lovely creature, just on the threshold of life, stamped into jelly by a herd of snorting ponies! But Sir Archibald apparently did not care what happened to me so long as he could rescue his countrywoman. I waited quite still in that awful moment when the clattering herd was charging down upon us, confident that a man of his strength and coolness would look out for us both. But he snatched the sacred person of the Killjoy, threw her against a gate, stood in front of her, and with outstretched arms defied the oncoming foe. His gesture, his courage, the look in his eye, would have made the wildest pony quail. It did more, — it made me quail; but in the

same instant he shouted to me, "Look out for yourself and be sharp! Shin up that bank! Look alive!"

Shinning was not my customary attitude, but it was not mine "to make reply." I shinned; that is all there is to say about the matter. I *was* "sharp" and I *did* "look alive," being deserted by my natural protector. I, Virginia Pomeroy, aged twenty-two, native of Richmond, U. S. A., clambered up one of those steep banks found only in Devonshire lanes,—a ten or twelve foot bank, crowned with a straggling, ragged hedge of thorn. I dug my fingers and toes into the earth and clutched at grass tufts, roots, or anything clutchable, and ended by tumbling into a thicket of freshly cut beechen twigs. I was as angry as I had breath to be, but somehow I was awed by the situation: by Mrs. MacGill's trembling gratitude; by Sir Archibald's presence of mind; by his imperious suggestion as to my way of escape, for I could never have climbed

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"Look out for yourself! Shin up that bank!"

that sheer wall of earth unless I had been ordered to in good set terms. Coming down from my heights a few minutes later, looking like an intoxicated lady who has resisted the well-meant advice of a policeman, I put Mrs. MacGill together and shook Sir Archibald's hand. I am sure I don't know why; he did precious little for me, but he had been something of a hero, nevertheless.

"*Shin up that bank and look alive!*" I was never spoken to in that way before, in all my life. I wish Breck Calhoun could have heard him!

. . . . . .

Mrs. MacGill

Saturday afternoon

I HAVE had a terrible experience, which has upset me completely and damaged my right knee, besides agitating me so much that I can scarcely remember how it happened. I have read that a drowning man sees his whole life before him in a flash of time. It is different with women perhaps. I saw no flash of anything, and thought only of myself, — remembering a horrible story I read somewhere about a horse in the Crimea that bit the faces of the enemy. Sir Archibald *flung* me against a gate. The intention was kind, I dare say, but even then I could just hear the beads ripping off my mantle, as I fell against the bars. The lane seemed full of ponies, all screaming, as I did n't know horses could scream, and kicking like so many grasshoppers.

"It's all right! Nothing has happened!" he called to the girl, when the herd receded.

"I don't know what you two call happened," I said, as soon as I could speak. "We have been nearly killed — all of us, especially me."

I looked at Miss Pomeroy; so did Sir Archibald. She is an active girl, and at the first suggestion of danger she had scrambled headlong up a steep bank, where she clung to the roots of the hedge, entirely forgetting all about me. She now came down, and required some assistance in descending, although she had climbed up, which is more difficult, all in a moment. She was certainly pale — really pale for the first time since she came here, and did not seem to think about her hat, which was hanging half-way down her back by this time. Poor Mr. MacGill used always to say that when a pretty girl forgot her appearance there was something really serious in the air. She seemed to have forgotten, but I dare

say she really was thinking that she looked nicer that way. She came up to the young man, and held out her hand to him, saying, "Thank you, Sir Archibald." Americans are very forward, certainly. If I had said "Thank you," and offered to shake hands with him, there might have been some reason for it, although I never thought of doing so; it was decidedly Me that Sir Archibald had rescued. This did not seem to make a bit of difference to them, however. He took her hand and shook it, and then I must say had the civility to give Me his arm, and we all walked back to the hotel. I felt so shattered that I went to bed for the rest of the afternoon.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie

GREY TOR INN

MRS. MACGILL is not the kind of person you'd associate with danger, — being an arm-chair-and-feather-bed sort of character, — yet, by Jingo, the old girl has had a narrow squeak to-day. She and Miss Virginia went out for a walk together, the companion being invisible with the usual headache. I thought I would follow them a little way. Mrs. MacGill is an interfering old person, and I have noticed of late that she scents a flirtation between the fair American and me. Whether there is a flirtation or not, I don't know (*I* am not learned in such things); but if there were, she is not the person to stop it, nor any other old cat on earth. She has merely succeeded — I wish she knew — in putting it into my head that American girls are apt to be exceedingly

attractive as well as eligible in the matrimonial market. I should think Miss Virginia was as eligible as any of them, and better-looking than most.

I kept the pair in sight, and it was lucky that I did. A tremendous explosion from a quarry where some men are blasting made me stop short, and as to the old girl in front, she leaped about a foot into the air, and I could hear Miss Virginia laugh and say something funny about ankles and white stockings. Just then a most extraordinary noise began at the top of the lane, a pounding of hoofs and grinding of gravel and flying of stones; and in another minute, round the corner of this lane, which was of the narrowest sort and nearly roofed in with trees and banks, as these beastly Devonshire lanes always are, came a herd of moor ponies — about twenty or thirty of them — squeaking and biting and kicking, in a regular stampede. The report of the blasting had startled them, I don't doubt,

and part terror, part vice, made them kick up a shindy and set off at full gallop. There was n't a moment to lose. I ran for the women, with a shout, thinking only of the young one, of course. But when I saw the two together, there was n't a question of which I must help. Miss Virginia had legs of her own; if Mrs. MacGill had any, they were past helping her now. There was a sort of hurdle to the right; I managed to jam the old woman against it and shout to the girl, "Shin up that bank! Look alive!" while I stood in front, waving my arms and carrying on like a madman to frighten the ponies. They bore down on us in a swelter of dust; but just when they were within about a yard of our position, they swerved to the left, stopped half a second, looking at us out of the corners of their eyes, snuffed the air, snorted, gave a squeal or two more, and galloped off down the lane. It was a pretty narrow shave, — nothing, of course, if the women had n't been there.

Miss Virginia and I shook hands over it, and between us we got the old lady back to the hotel, nearly melted with fright.

That night after dinner I was smoking on the verandah in front of the hotel. I heard Miss Virginia singing as she crossed the hall, and looked in.

"It 's rather a jolly night, Miss Pomeroy," I said, "not at all cold."

"Is n't it?" she asked, and came to the door.

"There 's a comfortable seat here," I added, "and the verandah keeps off the wind from the moor."

She came out. It was quite dark, for the sky was cloudy and there was no moon, but there was a splash of light where we sat, from the hall window, so that I could see Miss Virginia and she could see me. She was dressed in a very pretty frock, all pink and white, and I have certainly now come round to the artist's opinion that she is an uncommonly pretty girl; not that I care for

pretty girls, — of course they are the worst kind, and I have always avoided them so far.

"Well," said Miss Virginia, "you 've done a fairly good day's work, I should think, and can go to bed with an easy conscience and sleep the sleep of the just!"

"Why, particularly?" I inquired bashfully.

"Why?" cried Miss Virginia. "Have n't you rescued Age and Scotland from a cruel death? I suppose it did n't matter to you what became of Youth and America. But I forgive you, you managed the other so well."

I could n't help laughing and getting rather red, and Miss Virginia gave me a wicked look out of her black eyes.

"Why, Miss Pomeroy," I said in a confused way, "don't you see how it was? I argued to myself you had your own legs to save yourself on, while" —

But here Miss Virginia jumped up with a little scream.

"We don't talk about legs that way, where I come from!" she said, but I saw she was not really shocked, only laughing, with the rum little dimples coming out in her cheeks.

"Won't you shake hands again," I suggested, "to show you have quite forgiven me?"

Miss Virginia's hand was in mine, I was holding it, when who should come to the door and look out but Mrs. MacGill.

"I think it is very cold and damp for you to be out at this hour, Miss Pomeroy," she remarked pointedly.

"Well, I suppose it is, Mrs. MacGill," said Miss Virginia, as cool as you please, lifting up the long tail of her dress and making a little face at me over her shoulder.

Mrs. MacGill gave a long sniff and never budged till Miss Virginia was safely inside. The old harridan — I 'll teach her a lesson if she does n't mend her manners!

Cecilia Evesham

Friday evening

HERE I was interrupted, and now something new has happened that requires telling, so I 'll skip our adventures of Thursday afternoon, and go on to Friday. . . .

Well, this morning I came down to breakfast, almost blind with neuralgia. I struggled on till luncheon, when it became unbearable. Virginia (I call her that already) looked at me in the kindest way during the meal.

"You 're ill," she said. "You need putting to bed."

Mrs. MacGill looked surprised. "Cecilia is never very ill," she observed tepidly.

"She 's ill now, no mistake," Virginia persisted, and rose and came round to my side of the table. "Come and let me help you upstairs and put you to bed."

I was too ill to resist, and she led me to my room and tucked me up comfortably.

"Now," she said, "this headache wants peace of mind to cure it, I know the kind. You can't get peace for thinking about Mrs. MacGill. I 'm going to take her off your mind for the afternoon — it 's time I tried companioning — no girl knows when she may need to earn a living. You won't know your Mrs. MacGill when you get her again! I 'll dress her up and walk her out, and humour her."

She bent down and kissed me as she spoke. It was the sweetest kiss! Her face is like a peach to feel, and her clothes have a delicious scent of violets. Somehow all my troubles seemed to smooth out. She rustled away in her silk-lined skirts, and I fell into a much needed sleep, feeling that all would be well.

I was mistaken, however. All did not go well, but on the contrary something very unfortunate happened while I was sleeping

so quietly. It must have been about four o'clock when I was wakened by Virginia coming into my room again. She looked a little ruffled and pale.

"I 've brought Mrs. MacGill back to you, Miss Evesham," she said, "but it 's thanks to Sir Archibald, not to me. She will tell you all about it." With that Mrs. MacGill came tottering into the room, plumped down upon the edge of my bed, and began a breathless, incoherent story in which wild ponies, stampedes, lanes, Sir Archibald, and herself were all mixed up together.

"Did he really save you from a bad accident?" I asked Virginia, for it was impossible to make out anything from Mrs. MacGill.

Virginia nodded. "He did, Cecilia, and I like him," she said.

"Oh ho!" I thought. "Is it possible that I am going to be mixed up in a romance? She likes him, does she? Very good; we shall see."

And then, because the world always appears a neutral-tinted place to me, without high lights of any kind, I rebuked myself for imagining that anything lively could ever come my way. "I could n't even look on at anything romantic nowadays," I thought, "I doubt if there *is* such a thing as romance; it 's just a figment of youth. Come, Mrs. MacGill, I 'll find your knitting for you," I said; "that will compose you better than anything else."

IV

Virginia Pomeroy

The Grey Tor Inn

We had rather a nice half hour at Little Widger to-day, Sir Archibald and I. Of course we were walking. It is still incomprehensible to me, the comfort, the pleasure even, these people get out of the simple use of their legs. We passed Wishtcot and Wildycombe and then came upon Little Widger, not having known of its existence. The tiny hamlet straggles down a side hill and turns a corner, to terminate in the village inn, quaintly named "The Mug O' Cider." An acacia laden with yellow tassels hangs over the stone gate, purple and white lilacs burst through the hedges, and there is a cob-and-thatch cottage, with a daz-

zling white hawthorn in front of it and a black pig nosing at the gate.

Oh, the loveliness of that May noon, a sunny noon for once; the freshness of the beeches; the golden brown of the oaks; above all the shimmering beauty of the young birches! It was as if the sap had just brimmed and trembled into leaves; as if each drop had thinned itself into a transparent oval of liquid green.

The sight of Mrs. MacGill being dragged by Greytoria over a very distant hill was soothing in itself, or it would have been if I had n't known Miss Evesham was toiling up beside her. We were hungry and certain of being late to luncheon, so Sir Archibald proposed food of some sort at the inn. He had cold meat, bread and cheese, and a tankard of Devonshire cider, while I had delicious junket, clouted cream, and stewed apple. Before starting on our long homeward stroll we had a cosy chat, the accessories being a fire, a black cat, and a pipe, with occasional

incursions by a small maid-servant who looked exactly like a Devonshire hill pony, —strong, sturdy, stocky, heavy-footed, and tangled as to mane.

We were discussing our common lack of relatives. "I have no one but my mother and two distant cousins," I said.

The sympathetic man would have murmured, "Poor little soul!" and the too sentimental one would have seized the opportunity to exclaim, "Then let me be all in all to you!" But Sir Archibald removed his pipe and remarked, "Good thing, too, I dare say;" and then in a moment continued with graceful tact and frankness, "They say you can't tell anything about an American family by seeing one of 'em."

Upon my word, the hopeless candour of these our brethren of the British Isles is astonishing. Sometimes after a prolonged conversation with two or three of them I feel like going about the drawing-room with a small broom and dust-pan and sweeping

up the home truths that should lie in scattered profusion on the floor; and which do, no doubt, were my eyes as keen in seeing as my ears in hearing.

However, I responded meekly, "I suppose that is true; but I doubt if the peculiarity is our exclusive possession. None of my relatives belonged to the criminal classes, and they could all read and write, but I dare say some of them were more desirable than others from a social point of view. It must be so delicious to belong to an order of things that never questions itself! Breckinridge Calhoun says that is the one reason he can never quite get on with the men over here at first; which always makes me laugh, for in his way, as a rabid Southerner, he is just as bad."

There was quite an interval here in which the fire crackled, the black cat purred, and the pipe puffed. Sir Archibald broke the cosy silence by asking, "Who is this Mr. Calhoun whom you and your mother mention so often?"

The conversation that ensued was quite a lengthy one, but I will report as much of it as I can remember. It was like this: —

Jinny: Breckenridge Calhoun is my "childhood's friend," the kind of man whose estates join yours, who has known you ever since you were born; liked you, quarrelled with you, forgotten you, and been sweet upon you by turns; and who finally marries you, when you have both given up hope of finding anybody more original and startling. — By the way, am I the first American girl you 've met?

Sir A.: Not the first I 've met, but the first I 've known. There was a jolly sort of schoolgirl from Indiana whom I saw at my old aunt's house in Edinburgh. There were half a dozen elderly tabbies pressing tea and scones on her, and she cried, just as I was coming in the door, "Oh, no more tea, please! I could hear my last scone splash!"

Jinny, shaking with laughter: Oh, how lovely! I am so glad you had such a pic-

turesque and fearless young person as a first experience; but as she has been your only instructress you have much to learn, and I might as well begin my duty to you at once.

Sir A.: You're taking a deal of trouble.

Jinny: Oh, it 's no trouble, but a pleasure rather, to put a fellow-being on the right track. You must first disabuse your mind of the American girl as you find her in books.

Sir A.: Don't have to; never read 'em.

Jinny: Very well, then, — the American girl of the drama and casual conversation; that 's worse. You must forget her supposed freedom of thought and speech, her rustling silk skirts, her jingling side bag or chatelaine, her middle initial, her small feet and hands, her high heels, her extravagant dress, her fortune, — which only one in ten thousand possesses, — her overworked father and weakly indulgent mother, called respectively poppa and momma. These are but accessories, — the frame, not the picture. They exist, that

is quite true, but no girl has the whole list, thank goodness! I, for example, have only one or two of the entire lot.

Sir A.: Which ones? I was just thinking you had 'em all.

Jinny: You must find out something for yourself! The foundation idea of modern education is to make the pupil the discoverer of his own knowledge. As I was saying when interrupted, if you remove these occasional accompaniments of the American girl you find simply the same old "eternal feminine." Of course there is a wide range of choice. You seem to think over here that there is only one kind of American girl; but if you would only go into the subject deeply you would find fat and lean, bright and dull, pert and meek, some that could only have been discovered by Columbus, others that might have been brought up in the rocky fastnesses of a pious Scottish home.

Sir A.: I don't get on with girls particularly well.

Jinny: I can quite fancy that! Not one American girl in a hundred would take the trouble to understand you. You need such a lot of understanding that an indolent girl or a reserved one or a spoiled one or a busy one would keep thinking, "Does it pay?"

Sir A., reddening and removing his pipe thoughtfully, pressing down the tobacco in the bowl: Hullo, you can hit out when you like.

Jinny: I am not "hitting out;" I get on delightfully well with you because I have lots of leisure just now to devote to your case. Of course it would be a great economy of time and strength if you chose to meet people halfway, or perhaps an eighth! It's only the amenities of the public street, after all, that casual acquaintances need, in order to have a pleasant time along the way. The private path is quite another thing; even I put out the sign "No thoroughfare" over that; but I don't see why you need build

bramble hedges across the common roads of travel. — Do you know what a "scare-cat" is?

Sir. A.: Can't say I do.

Jinny: It's a nice expressive word belonging to the infants' vocabulary of slang. I think you are regular "scare-cats" over here, when it comes to the treatment of casual acquaintances. You must be clever enough to know a lady or a gentleman when you see one, and you don't take such frightful risks with ladies and gentlemen.

During this entire colloquy Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie, Baronet, of Kindarroch, eyed me precisely as if he had been a dignified mastiff observing the incomprehensible friskings of a playful, foolish puppy of quite another species. "Good Heavens," thinks the mastiff, raising his eyes in devout astonishment, "can I ever at any age have disported myself like that? The creature seems to have positively none of my qualities; I wonder if it really *is* a dog?"

"Do you approve of marriage, — go in for it?" queried Sir Archibald in a somewhat startling manner, after a long pause and puffing steadily the while.

"I approve of it entirely," I answered, "especially for men; women are terribly hampered by it, to be sure."

"I should have put that in exactly the opposite way," he said thoughtfully.

"I know you would," I retorted, "and that 's precisely the reason I phrased it as I did. One must keep your attention alive by some means or other, else it would go on strike and quit work altogether."

Sir Archibald threw back his head and broke into an unexpected peal of laughter at this. "Come along out of doors, Miss Virginia Pomeroy," he said, standing up and putting his pipe in his pocket. "You 're an awfully good chap, American or not!"

Mrs. MacGill

Sunday evening

This day has been very wet. I had fully intended to go to church, because I always make a point of doing so unless too ill to move, as I consider it fully more a duty than a privilege, and example is everything. However, after the fright I had yesterday, and the shaking, I had such a pain in my right knee that devotion was out of the question, even had my mantle been fit to put on (which it won't be until Cecilia has mended all the trimming), so I resolved to stay quietly in bed. After luncheon I could get no sleep, for Miss Pomeroy was singing things which Cecilia says are camp meeting hymns. They sounded to me like a circus, but they may introduce dance music at church services in New York, and make horses dance to it, too. Anything is possible to a people that

can produce girls like Virginia Pomeroy. One can hardly believe in looking at her that she belongs to the nation of Longfellow, who wrote that lovely poem on Maidenhood. Poor Mr. MacGill used to be very fond of it: —

> "Standing, with reluctant feet,
> Where the brook and river meet."

Even if there were a river here (we can see nothing of the Dart from this hotel), one could never connect Miss Pomeroy with 'reluctant feet' in any way. She has quite got hold of that unfortunate young man. With my poor health, and sleeping so badly, it is very difficult for me to interfere, but justice to the son of my old friend will make me do what I can.

About half past five I came down and could see nobody. Mrs. Pomeroy suffers from the same tickling cough as I do, after drinking tea, and had gone to her own room. Cecilia was nowhere to be seen. I asked the waiter, who is red-faced but a Methodist, to

tell me where she was, and he told me in the Billiard Room. Of course I did n't know where I was going, or I should never have entered it, especially on a wet Sunday afternoon; but when I opened the door I stood horrified by what I saw.

Miss Pomeroy may be accustomed to such a place (I have read that they are called "brandy saloons" in America), but I never saw anything like it. There was a great deal of tobacco, which at once set up my tickling cough. Sir Archibald was holding what gamblers call a cue, and rubbing it with chalk, I suppose to deaden the sound. On a table — there were several chairs in the room, so it cannot have been by mistake — sat Miss Pomeroy and Cecilia. The American was strumming on a be-ribboned banjo.

"Oh, Mrs. MacGill, I thought you were asleep," said Cecilia.

"I wish I were; but I fear that what I see is only too true. Pray, Cecilia, come away with me at once," I exclaimed.

Sir Archibald had placed a chair for me, but I took no notice of it, except to say, "I'm surprised that you don't offer *me* a seat on the table."

We left the room at once, and I spoke to Cecilia with some severity, saying that I could never countenance such on-goings, and that Miss Pomeroy was leading her all wrong. "If she is determined to marry a baronet," I said, "let her do it; but even an American might think it more necessary that a baronet should be determined to marry her, and might shrink from such a form of pursuit. Well, if you are determined to laugh at me," I went on, "there must be some other arrangement between us, but you cannot leave me at present, alone on a hill-side like this, just after influenza, amongst herds of wild ponies."

Cecilia cried at last, and upset me so much that I had another bad night, suffering much from my knee, and obliged to have a cup of cocoa at 2.30 A. M. Cecilia appeared half

asleep as she made it, although the day before she could spring out of bed the moment the light came in, to look at the sunrise. These so-called poetic natures are very puzzling and inconsistent.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie

THERE is no doubt, alas! that the weather is improving and that we shall soon be in for that picnic. I have promised the motor and promised my society. There is something about that girl which makes me feel and act in a way I hardly think is quite normal. She forces me to do things I don't want to do, and the things don't seem so bad in themselves, at least as long as she is there. The artist I saw at Exeter has turned up here, the one who comes to look at the gorse; at any rate he makes a man to speak to, which is a merciful variety. He talks a lot of rot of course, — raves about the "blue distance" here, as if it mattered what colour the distance is. But I think he is off his chump in other ways besides; for instance, he was saying to-day he was sick of landscape and pining to try his hand at a portrait.

"There's your model all ready," said I,

indicating Miss Virginia, all in white, with a scarlet parasol, looking as pretty as a rose.

"Bah!" says the artist, "who wants to paint 'the young person' whose eyes show you a blank past, a delightful present, and a prosperous future! Eyes that have cried are the only ones to paint. I should prefer the old lady's companion."

I felt positively disgusted at this, but of course there is no accounting for tastes, and if a man is as blind as a bat, he can't help it; only I wonder he elects to gain his livelihood as an artist.

I walked with Miss Virginia to-day down to the little village about a mile away. It was all through the lanes, and I could hardly get her along because of the flowers. The banks were certainly quite blue with violets, and Miss Virginia would pick them, though I explained it was waste of time, for they would all be dead in half an hour and have to be thrown away.

"But if I make up a nice little bunch for

your buttonhole," said she, "will that be waste of time?" Of course I was obliged to say "No," — you have to tell such lies to women, one of the reasons I dislike their society.

"But of course you will throw them away as soon as they are faded, poor dears!" continued Miss Virginia.

I did n't see what else a sensible man could do with decaying vegetation, though it was plain that this was not what she expected me to say. Luckily, the village came in sight at this moment, so I was able to change the subject.

Miss Virginia seems very keen on villages, and went on about the thatched cottages and the church tower and the lich-gate in such a way that I conclude they don't have these things in America, where people are really up to date. It was in vain for me to tell her that thatch is earwiggy as well as damp, and that every sensible landowner is substituting slate roofs as fast as he can. We went into

the church, which was as cold and dark as a vault, and Miss Virginia was intensely pleased with that too, and I could hardly get her away. In the mean time, the sun had come out tremendously strong, and as it had rained for some days previously, the whole place was steaming like a cauldron, and we both suddenly felt most awfully slack.

"Let 's take a bite here," I suggested. "There is sure to be a pothouse of sorts, and we shall be late for the hotel luncheon anyway."

The idea seemed to please Miss Virginia, and we hunted for the pothouse and found it in a corner.

"Oh, what a dear little inn!" cried she. "I shall love anything they serve here!"

I was thinking of the luncheon, not the inn, myself, and did not expect great things from the look of the place, which was low and poky, with thatched eaves and windows all buried in clematis and ivy. A little cobbled path led up to the door, with lots of

wallflower growing in the crannies of the wall on each side. There was nobody but a lass to attend to us, and she gave us bread and cheese, and clouted cream and plum jam. It was n't bad. Virginia talked ten to the dozen all the time, and the funny thing was, she made me talk, too. For the first time in my life I felt that it might not be a bad thing to be friends with a girl as you can be with a man, but such a thing is not possible, of course. After a while Virginia went off to make friends with the landlady and pick flowers in the garden. How beastly dingy and dark the inn parlour seemed then, when I had time to look about! I felt, all of a sudden, most tremendously down on my luck. Why? I have had these fits of the blues lately; I think it must be the Devonshire cream; I must stop it.

We got home all right. I carried all Miss Virginia's flowers which the old woman had given her, — about a stack of daffodils, lilies, and clematis.

Cecilia Evesham

Sunday evening

I BEGIN to think I am what is called a psychical person, for I woke this morning with a strong presentiment of things happening or about to happen. The day did not seem to lend itself to events; it had broken with rain lashing the window panes and a gale of wind blowing through every crevice of the hotel. Mrs. MacGill did not feel able to rise for breakfast. As a matter of fact she was more able to do so than I was, but she did n't think so, which settled the matter. Therefore I went down to the breakfast-room alone.

If the outer air was dreary, the scene indoors was very cheerful. A large fire blazed in the grate, and in front of the rain-lashed windows a table was laid for three. Virginia and Sir Archibald were already seated at it, and he rose, as I came in, and showed me that my place was with them.

"We felt sure that Mrs. MacGill would not appear this morning," he said, "so we thought we might all breakfast together."

What a gay little meal that was! Virginia was at her brightest; she would have made an owl laugh. I found myself forgetting headache and unhappiness, as I listened to her; and as for Sir Archibald, he seemed another man altogether from the rigid young Scotchman of our first acquaintance.

"Well, now, Sir Archibald," said Virginia, as she rose from the table, "the question is what a well brought up young man like you is going to do with himself all this wet day. I know what we are to be about, Miss Evesham and I, — we are going to look at all my new Paris gowns, and try on all my best hats."

"There 's always the motor," he said.

Virginia had none of that way of hanging about with young men that English girls have. There could be no doubt that she was interested in Sir Archibald, and wished him

to be interested in her, but apparently for that very reason she would not let him see too much of her that morning. She carried me off to her room, and kept me there so long, looking at her clothes, that Mrs. MacGill found sharp fault with me when at last I returned to her. What had I been doing? I might have known that she would want me, etc.; she had decided not to get up until tea time. "It is impossible to go to church, and it is much easier to employ one's time well in bed," she said. So in bed she remained, and I in attendance upon her until it was time for luncheon.

When I went downstairs, Virginia had also appeared again, and I saw the wisdom and skill of her tactics; she was far more pleasing to the young man now, because he had seen nothing of her all morning, and she knew it. Sir Archibald, it appeared, had passed his time in the motor-shed, presumably either examining the machinery of the motor or polishing it up. Virginia seemed

to have been writing letters; she brought a bundle of them down with her, and laid one, address uppermost, on the table beside her. It was addressed to "Breckenridge Calhoun, Esq., Richmond, Virginia, U. S. A."

I saw Sir Archibald's eyes rest on it for a second, but the moment he realized the name he almost consciously averted his glance from the envelope for the remainder of the meal.

Virginia was very lively.

"Well, now, Sir Archibald, I 'm going to hear you your catechism after lunch; it 's a good occupation for Sunday afternoon," she said. "You 'll come right into the coffee-room, and recite it to me, and Miss Evesham shall correct your mistakes."

"I 'll try to acquit myself well," he answered, following her meekly into the coffee-room.

"What is your name?" she began.

"Archibald George," he replied, and Virginia went on: —

"I 'll invent the rest of the questions, I

think, so please answer them well. How old are you?"

"Thirty-one years and two months."

"Have you any profession?"

"None."

"Pursuits?"

"Various."

"Name these."

"Motoring, bicyling, shooting, fishing."

"That will do; you may sit down," observed Virginia gravely, and then, turning to me, "I think the young man has acquitted himself very creditably in this difficult exam. Miss Evesham, shall we give him a certificate?"

"Yes," I replied, laughing at her nonsense. Virginia wrote out on a sheet of paper: —

This is to certify that Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie passed a creditable examination in Pedigree and Pursuits.

(Signed) Virginia S. Pomeroy.

"Here," she said, folding it up and giving it to the young man, "you should keep this among the proudest archives of your house."

Sir Archibald put it into his pocket with a funny little smile. "It shall have the greatest care, always," he assured her. "And now, Miss Pomeroy, won't you and Miss Evesham come and have a game of billiards with me? I must relax my mind after all this effort."

I knew that I should not consent to this proposition; Virginia knew that she should not; we both hesitated for a moment, and then Virginia, with a glance at the storm outside, made a compromise in favor of decorum.

"Well, there does n't seem to be much else to do this wet afternoon," she said. "I don't care if I do come and see how well you play, Sir Archibald, and perhaps Miss Evesham will come and applaud also."

I did n't see much difference between

playing ourselves and seeing him play, but perhaps there was a little.

"I 'll fetch my banjo," proposed Virginia, "and I can sing while you have your game."

So to the billiard-room we went, and Virginia perched herself in a window niche. From this point of vantage she watched Sir Archibald's strokes, while she strummed away on the instrument, and sang delicious little songs in her clear, bird-like voice. I watched them both closely. Sir Archibald was not attending to his play; I saw that he was thinking far more about her.

"Won't you even chalk my cue for me?" he asked her, holding out the chalk.

She received it daintily between her finger and thumb. He stood beside us, looking down at her in the unmistakable way; he was falling in love, but he scarcely knew it.

"There 's your nasty chalk! See, I 've whited all my sleeve," she said, making a distracting little grimace. She held out her sleeve for him to see, and of course he

brushed the chalk gently off it, and looked into her eyes for a moment. I almost felt myself in the way, but I knew that I was necessary to them just then. They had not advanced far enough in their flirtation to be left alone yet, so I contented myself. They both, I thought, were taking me into their confidence. "You understand — you won't betray us — we mean no harm," they seemed to say to me; and I determined that this should be my attitude. I would play gooseberry obligingly for just so long as I was wanted, and when the right moment came, would equally obligingly leave them.

The afternoon went merrily on. Sir Archibald sent for a whiskey and soda, and Virginia fetched a huge box of French bonbons, and we refreshed ourselves according to our tastes. Virginia had just slipped a very large piece of nougat into her mouth, and I was just going to put a bit into mine, but happily had n't done so, when the door opened, and Mrs. MacGill came walking in,

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THE DOOR OPENED, AND MRS. MACGILL CAME WALKING IN

with an air of angry bewilderment on her face. A billiard cue to her means nothing but dissipation, a whiskey and soda nothing short of sodden drunkenness, so the whole scene appeared to her a sort of wild orgy. If she had only known how innocent it all was!

"Cecilia," she exclaimed, "the waiter told me that you were here, but I could scarcely believe him!"

I affected not to see that she was shocked.

"I dare say it is nearly tea time," I said. "Shall we go into the dining-room?"

Mrs. MacGill had a right to be angry with me, but I do not think any indiscretion could deserve the torrent of stupid upbraiding that fell upon me now. Many of her reproaches were deserved. I was too old to have given countenance to this afternoon in the billiard-room; I should have known better.

But when all is said and done, life is short; short, and for most of us disappointing. We cannot afford to put a bar across the

difficult road to happiness. I saw two young creatures, who seemed very well suited to each other, in need of my friendly countenance, and I determined to give it. Was I altogether wrong? Well, Mrs. MacGill thought so at any rate, and told me so with wearisome iteration. I shrugged my shoulders, and took the scolding as a necessary corrective to a very happy afternoon.

V

Virginia Pomeroy

GREY TOR INN
AT THE WORLD'S END
Monday, May, —

MRS. MACGILL, inspired by the zeal with which the rest are re-reading Hardy, Blackmore, Baring-Gould, and Phillpotts, has finished a book of each of these novelists who play the "pipes of the misty moorlands." She dislikes them all, but her liveliest disapproval is reserved for the first and last named. She finds them most immoral, and says that if she could have believed that such ill-conducted persons resided in Dartmoor or anywhere in Devonshire, she would not have encouraged the Grey Tor Inn by her presence. As to the language spoken by some of the characters, she is inclined to think no one could ever have heard it.

"There would be no sense in their using such words," she explains triumphantly, "for no one would understand them;" continuing the argument by stating that she once heard the Duke of Devonshire open a public meeting, and he spoke in exceptionally good English.

All this makes me rather wicked, so when I went down to breakfast to-day I said cheerfully, "Gude-marnin' to you! Marnin', Mrs. MacGill! How do 'e like my new gown, Cecilia? — it 's flam-new! Marnin', Sir Archibald! I did n't know 'e in the dimpsey light; bide wheer you be, I 'll take this seat. . . . Will I have bacon and eggs? Ess fay; there 'll be nought else, us all knows that. Theer 's many matters I want to put afore 'e to-day. . . . Do 'e see thicky li'l piece o' bread 'pon the plate, Cecilia? Pass it to me, will 'e? I know I be chitterin' like a guinea-fowl, but I be a sort o' public merryman bringin' folks the blessing o' honest laughter. . . .

Can us have blind up if 't is all the same to you, Mrs. MacGill? I doan't like eatin' in the dark."

Then when mamma said, "*Jinny!*" in italics, and looked at me beseechingly, I exclaimed, "Gaw your ways, mother! I ban't feared o' you, an' I doan't mind tellin' 'e 't is so." When Sir Archibald, bursting with laughter, remarked it was a fine day, I replied, "You 'm right theer; did 'e ever see ought like un? Theer 's been a wonnerful change in the weather; us be called 'pon to go downlong to Widdington-in-the-Wolds to-day to see the roundy-poundies.

"Along by the river we 'll ram'le about
A-drowin' th' line and a-ketchin' o' trout;
An' when we 've got plenty we 'll start ver our huomes
An' tull all our doings while pickin' ther buones."

By this time Mrs. MacGill, thoroughly incensed, remarked that there was no accounting for taste in jokes, whereupon I responded genially, "You 'm right theer; it 's a wonnerful coorious rackety world; in

fact, in the language of Eden, 'I'll be gormed if it ban't a 'mazin' world!"

Mamma at this juncture said, with some heat, that if this were the language of Eden she judged it was after the advent of the serpent; at which Sir Archibald and Miss Evesham and I screamed with laughter and explained that I meant Eden Phillpotts, not the Garden of Eden.

The day was heavenly, as I said, and seemed intended by Providence for our long deferred picnic to Widdington-in-the-Wolds. Mamma and Mrs. MacGill wanted to see the church, Cecilia and I wanted any sort of an outing. Sir Archibald had not viewed the plan with any warmth from the first, but I was determined that he should go, for I thought he needed chastening. Goodness knows he got it, and for that matter so did I, which was not in the bargain.

I refuse to dwell on the minor incidents of that interminable day. Mrs. MacGill, for general troublesomeness, outdid her proudest

previous record; no picnic polluted by her presence could be an enjoyable occasion, but this one was frowned upon by all the Fates. There is a Dartmoor saying that God looks arter his own chosen fules, which proves only that we were fules, but not chosen ones. The luncheon was eaten in a sort of grassy gutter, the only place the party could agree upon. It was begun in attempted jocularity and finished in unconcealed gloom. Mrs. MacGill, on perceiving that we were eating American tongue, declined it, saying she had no confidence in American foods. I buried my face in my napkin and wept ostentatiously. She became frightened and apologized, whereupon I said I would willingly concede that we were not always poetic and were sometimes too rich, but that when it came to tinning meats it was cruel to deny our superiority. This delightful repast over and its remains packed in our baskets, we sought the inn.

Mrs. MacGill sank upon a feather bed in

one of the upstairs rooms, and my mother extended herself on two chairs in the same apartment, adding to my depression by the remark she reserves for her most melancholy moments: "If your poor father had lived, he would never have allowed me to undertake this."

I did n't dare face Sir Archibald until he had digested his indigestible meal, so Miss Evesham and I went for a walk. Naturally it rained before we had been out a half hour, and unnaturally we met Mr. Willoughby, the artist, again. I ran back to the inn while they took shelter under a sycamore. I said I did n't want my dress spoiled, and I spoke the truth, but I did also want to give Miss Evesham the tonic of male society and conversation, of which she stands in abject need. By the time she is forty, if this sort of conventual life goes on, she will be as timorous as the lady in Captain Marryatt's novel who, whenever a gentleman shook hands with her, felt cold chills running up and down her back.

I took a wrong turning and arrived at the inn soaked as to outer garments. After a minute or two in the motor-shed with Sir Archibald, I had a fire kindled in the bedroom; but before I could fully dry myself they were clamouring for me to come down and add my cheerful note to the general cackle, for mamma and Mrs. MacGill had ordered early tea. There was a cosy time for a few minutes when Miss Evesham gaily toasted bread on a fork and Mr. Willoughby buttered it, and Sir Archibald opened a quaint instrument in a corner by the fire. I struck the yellow keys of the thing absently. It was a tiny Broadwood of a bygone century, fashioned like a writing-desk with a sort of bookcase top to it. I tried "Loch Lomond" for Mr. Willoughby, and then, as a surprise to Cecilia, sang my little setting of the verses she gave me the other day. The words brought tears to her eyes, and Sir Archibald came closer. "More, more!" he pleaded, but I said, "I don't feel a bit like

it, Sir Archibald; if you 'll let me off now I 'll sing nicely for you when they 've gone." He looked unmistakably pleased. "That 's good of you," he whispered, "and I 've ordered fresh tea made after the mob disperses."

"Don't forget that my mother is one of your so-called 'mob,'" I said severely.

"Oh, you know what I mean," he responded (he always blushes when he is chaffed). "I get on famously with your mother, but three or four women in a little low-ceiled room like this always look like such a bunch, you know!"

Then there was a dreadful interval of planning, in which Mrs. MacGill, who appeared to think it necessary that she should be returned to the Grey Tor Inn in safety whatever happened to anybody else, was finally despatched in the motor with mamma, Miss Evesham, and Johnson; while Sir Archibald and I confronted with such courage as we might, the dismal prospect of a three hours' tussle with Greytoria.

Mrs. MacGill

This has been a terrible day of fatigue and discomfort. I was a woman of sixty in the morning, but I felt like a woman of eighty-six by night. Danger, especially when combined with want of proper food, ages one in a short time. My sister Isabella, who knew Baden Powell, declares that she would scarcely have recognized him to be the same man after as before the siege of Mafeking, particularly about the mouth.

My velvet mantle, after all it has suffered, will never be as good again, and I have reason to be thankful if I escape a severe illness on my own account after the mad rashness of this day's proceedings.

The young people (I include Cecilia, though considerably over thirty) had been talking a great deal about an expedition to a distant hamlet called Widdington-in-the-

Wolds. Miss Pomeroy had, of course, persuaded that misguided young man to take her in the motor, although there can be little conversation of a tender nature in a machine that makes such awful noises; still young people now can doubtless shout anything. Poor Mr. MacGill used always to say that he could scarcely catch *my* replies.

Cecilia assured me that it was a short drive, so I consented to allow her to take me in a pony chaise. Certainly I never saw a quieter-looking animal than that pony at first sight; she had, indeed, an air of extreme gentleness. People say that is frequently combined with great strength — at least in dogs, and I think in men too; in horses it does not seem to be the case, for this poor animal had a very dangerous habit of putting her hind feet together and sliding down a descent. Several times at small declivities she seemed to slide forwards, and the carriage slid after her, so that I thought we should both be thrown out. At last, having driven many

miles, meeting several droves of the wild ponies, which happily did us no harm, we came to the top of a quite precipitous hill, which Cecilia declared we must descend before we could arrive at Widdington.

I had already warned her that I felt no confidence in her driving, but she is sadly obstinate, and made some almost impertinent retort, so we began to descend the hill. We had gone only a short distance, however, when the pony, curiously enough, sat down.

"Is this a common action with horses, Cecilia?" I gasped.

Then came a cracking noise. "It 's the shafts breaking, I 'm afraid," she said quite coolly, and jumped out. I got out too, of course, as fast as I could, and Cecilia began to undo the straps of the animal's harness. Again I felt I had had a narrow escape. I am not able now for these nervous shocks — they take too much out of me. I had been reading some of those alarming books about the neighbourhood, and felt I should be

quite afraid to ask for assistance from any passer-by. There were none, as we had seen nothing but ponies since we left Grey Tor, but in several books the violent passions of the natives had been described.

Cecilia said that she would lead the animal, so we started to go down the long hill, which was so very steep I thought I should never reach the bottom. Cecilia seemed to think nothing of it. "You can do it quite well, Mrs. MacGill," she said. "Well," I replied, "if a creature with four feet, like that pony, can tumble so, how do you suppose that I, on two, can do it easily?" My velvet mantle, though warm, is very heavy, and my right knee was still extremely painful. It now began to rain a little, and the sky got very dark, which, I remember, the books say is always a prelude to one of those terrific storms which apparently sweep across Dartmoor in a moment. "If it rains," I said, "the river always rises. 'Dart is up,' as they say, and we shall never reach home

alive." Cecilia declared in her stupid way that we were nowhere near the Dart. "Why are we on Dartmoor, then?" I asked. "I have read everywhere that the river runs with appalling velocity, and sweeps on in an angry torrent, carrying away trees and houses like straw; there are no trees, but those small houses down there would be swept away in no time. If we can only get down to the village, and get something to eat, and a carriage to take us home in, I shall be thankful!"

Cecilia appeared uncertain as to whether we could get any means of conveyance at the inn, so I suggested that we should just walk on. "Nothing," I said, "shall make me try to go back with that animal. Our lives were in danger when she sat down. I am sure that they must have a quieter horse of some kind, in such a lonely place."

Somehow or other we did get down, and were standing by the wayside when Sir Archibald's motor drove towards us, seeming to have descended the hills in per-

fect safety. Miss Pomeroy, of course, was on the box. She *looked* rouged. I cannot be quite certain, as I am unaware of ever having seen any one whom I absolutely knew to be addicted to the habit, but Mr. MacGill had a cousin whom he used to speak of with considerable asperity, who used to be known as "the damask rose," and that was because she painted, I am sure. Miss Pomeroy's cheeks were startling. Her poor mother looked like leather, but was calm enough, in the back seat. She is a sensible woman, and when the young people (I include Cecilia for convenience) all began to exclaim in their silly way about Widdington, calling it "lovely" and "picturesque" (I must say that Sir Archibald had too much good sense to join in this), she remarked aside to me with a quiet smile, "You and I, Mrs. MacGill, are too old to care about the picturesque upon an empty stomach." To stand in a damp church with a stiff knee is even worse, as I told Cecilia, when she had insisted on dragging me into

the building, which smells of mildew. The sacred edifice should always, I hope, suggest thoughts of death to all of us, but Miss Pomeroy appeared more cheerful than usual, and stood talking with Cecilia about pillars till I was chilled through. The cold is more penetrating in these old churches than anywhere else — I suppose because so many people used to be buried there. It seems hideous to relate that on coming out, we sat down to lunch in a ditch.

Mrs. Pomeroy is so infatuated about her daughter that she would do anything to please her. I insisted at first that Cecilia was to accompany me into the inn, but Mrs. Pomeroy gave me such an account of the scene of carousal going on there that, rather than sit in the bar, I consented to eat out of doors.

The others called it a fine day, and even spoke of enjoyment. It showed good sense on the part of our cavalier that he, at least, never made any pretence of enjoying him-

self. He is thoroughly sick of that girl, but she will run after him. It makes me ashamed of my sex. When I was a girl I always affected not to see Mr. MacGill until he absolutely spoke to me; and even when he had made me a distinct offer — which girls like Virginia Pomeroy do not seem to consider necessary — I appeared to hesitate, and told him to ask papa. Of course if Mr. Pomeroy is dead (and her mother always wears black, though not the full costume — she may be only divorced, one hears such things about Americans), why then one can't expect her to do *that*, but I very much doubt if she will ever consult Mrs. Pomeroy for a moment — that is to say, if she can squeeze anything at all like a proposal from Sir Archibald.

I have tried in vain to put the young man upon his guard. Give them hair and complexion, and they are deaf adders all; yet what is that compared to principle, and some notion of cooking! Miss Pomeroy asks for

nothing if she has a box of sweets; yet only the other day I heard her confess to eating bread and cheese in an inn, along with that unfortunate young man, who probably considered it a proof of simplicity. He is sadly mistaken. Ten courses at dinner is the ordinary thing in New York, I believe, one of them canvas-back ducks upon ice!

By three o'clock, when this horrid meal was over, Mrs. Pomeroy and I were both so chilled and fatigued that I sent Cecilia to entreat that the woman of the inn would allow us to rest for an hour in a room where there were no drunkards. We were conducted to a small bedchamber, where I lay down on the bed, while Mrs. Pomeroy had a nap upon two chairs. Like myself, she is always troubled by a tendency to breathlessness after eating — and even lunch in a ditch is a meal, of course. She also talked a little about her daughter in perhaps a pardonable strain for a mother, who can scarcely be expected to realize what the girl really is.

A Mr. Calhoun of Richmond, a suburb of New York, appears to have paid her some attentions. She must have greatly exaggerated them to her mother, for Mrs. Pomeroy evidently believes that it is fully in her power to marry the young man if she likes. It will be a merciful escape for Sir Archibald for a while, even though they can be divorced so easily in New York.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie

I KNEW the moment I opened my eyes that morning that the day of the picnic had come. The sun was shining brightly, the birds were singing. Even before breakfast there were tourists sitting on Grey Tor and holding on to the rails. I could see them against the sky. When we were all at breakfast, even the old women were excited about the picnic, and as to Miss Virginia, there was no holding her at all. She pointed out that she had dressed for the picnic in a brand-new frock especially built by one of the smart court dressmakers for such occasions, for which it was about as well suited (I pointed out) as a ball-dress would have been. It was no good my saying anything, that these brilliant mornings were not to be trusted, that the road to Widdington-in-the-Wolds was the worst in the country, that there was nothing

to do or see when you got there; I was overruled on every point, and all the arrangements were made. I must own I was not in a good temper anyway. A man has his ups and downs; I had had a worrying letter from the steward at Kindarroch. My tobacco was done and the fresh packet had n't arrived with the morning post, so that my pouch was filled with a filthy weed from the hotel. Had our party been composed of only Miss Virginia and her mother, it would not have been so bad, for then I should have insisted on giving them lunch at a pothouse, and all the horrors of an *al fresco* entertainment would have been avoided. But Mrs. MacGill and her companion were a part of the show, and the old woman actually hinted that I was to drive her in the pony-shay, while Johnson conducted the rest of the party in the motor! I showed her her mistake both clearly and promptly, and had her packed off about an hour before we started; except for the companion, who is a decent sort of girl,

I could have wished her to capsize on the way.

We got off in the motor all right — Miss Virginia on the box seat with me, and the mother behind with Johnson. The going was all right for the first few miles. Virginia did most of the talking, which was lucky, for I was not brilliant. It seems odd how a fellow's mood can be stronger than circumstances. Here was I, on a lovely day, with a pretty girl on the box beside me, nothing so very much as yet to have put me out, as black as a thundercloud. Of course the idiocy of a picnic (on which I have dwelt before) always puts my back up; I did n't want to come, and yet on this occasion, for some reason or other, I could not stay away. I really think that feeling more than anything else made me so devilish ill-tempered. I had soon good cause enough for ill temper, however. The road was all right at first, as I said, but presently it gave a dip, and then without the slightest warning we found our-

selves on a hill as steep as the sides of a well, and about as comfortable for a motor as the precipices of Mont Blanc. It was dangerous. I hate being in unnecessary danger myself — it is silly; and as to being in danger with women in charge, it is the very devil. I jammed on the brakes, and we went skidding and scraping down, showers of grit and gravel being thrown up in our faces, the whole machine shaking to bits with the strain. It was a miracle nothing happened worse than the loss of my temper. The hill got easier after about a mile. Miss Virginia, who had been frightened to death but had kept quiet and held on tight, began to laugh and talk again; but I showed pretty plainly I was in no laughing or talking mood. I kept a grim silence and looked ahead. I saw her turn and look at me, once or twice, in a surprised way, and then she suddenly became quite quiet too. In this significant silence, we drew up at the village inn, where Mrs. MacGill and Miss Evesham had already arrived.

Guide-books and artists talk yards about this place, Widdington-in-the-Wolds, but as usual there is nothing to see but a church, a particularly insanitary churchyard, a few thatched cottages, two or three big sycamore trees, and an inn, so very small as to be hardly visible to the naked eye.

We found the Exeter artist here before us, and I walked off with him at once, leaving the women to themselves. Otherwise I should certainly have burst, I believe; it is not healthy to refrain from bad language too long. However, all the agonies of picnic had to be gone through, — lunch in a ditch, cold, clammy food, forced conversation, and all the rest of it. Certainly that picnic was a failure; even Miss Virginia was subdued. When the feeding was done, I went off with Willoughby, the artist, again. I don't know what the women did with themselves, I am sure. As I had foretold, the weather had changed; there had been one cold shower already, and the clouds were piling up in the

sky, threatening a wet, cold, and windy afternoon. I knew how it would be, perfectly well, before we started, but no one would heed me.

Cecilia Evesham

Tuesday evening

This will be a long story to tell. On Monday morning Mrs. MacGill was very lively, perhaps wakened up by the explosion of the previous night. She came down to breakfast, and was persuaded by the Pomeroys to undertake an expedition to Widdington-in-the-Wolds, an outlying hamlet famous for an old church.

"It is long since I have lunched out of doors, Mrs. Pomeroy," she said, "but the doctor has so strongly recommended carriage exercise and fresh air to me, that I dare say on such a very fine morning I might make the attempt, if you are thinking of it."

Mrs. Pomeroy had been made to think of it by the fair Virginia, as I well knew; for the expedition was to be carried out in Sir Archibald's motor.

"One should always make an effort to see

all places of interest in a neighbourhood," Mrs. Pomeroy observed, with the sigh of the conscientious American sight-seer, and Mrs. MacGill assented. My heart sank. Fancy visiting places of interest in the company of Mrs. MacGill! But, as Browning has it, "Never the hour and the place and the loved one all together!" I have noticed the curious, indomitable tendency of tiresome people to collect and reappear in these exquisite places most favoured by nature; more suited, it would seem, for angel visitants than for the flat-footed multitude, but I digress.

The fact remained that it was in close company with Mrs. MacGill that I was to visit the solitudes of Dartmoor, — Mrs. MacGill in a bead-trimmed mantle, a bonnet ornamented with purple velvet pansies, and an eis-wool shawl tied round her throat.

I was to drive her in the pony cart; even her fears were not aroused by the dejected appearance of Greytoria as that noble animal was led up to the front door.

"I am glad to see that the horse does not look spirited," she said; "for though you say you are so well accustomed to driving, I always prefer a coachman."

With a quick twitch of the reins I raised Greytoria's drooping nose from the dust. She seemed surprised, but ambled off in the indicated direction.

"The road" — to quote Christina Rossetti — "wound uphill all the way," and a long way it was. We crawled along at about the rate of a mile an hour over that rough and stony track. The lines I have just quoted haunted my memory with their dismal significance — Life, life! your long uphill road has little promise of rest for me.

We toiled on. Then the summit was gained at last, and down below us, in a little nest-like green valley, huddled between the swelling brown moors, lay Widdington-in-the Wolds, the Mecca of our pilgrimage.

"There it is at last!" I cried. "See the quaint old church tower!" I actually ap-

pealed to Mrs. MacGill for sympathy, so great was my enthusiasm. It was a mistake.

"I see little to admire, Cecilia," she said, "and do look after the pony."

Her admonition was not unnecessary. In my delight I had risen in my seat and let the reins slip out of my inattentive fingers. Greytoria, in a manner peculiar to herself, had begun the descent of the terrifying hill which leads down to Widdington. Clapping her heels together like a bowing Frenchman, she let herself slide down the decline. I realized this in a moment, but it was rather too late. There was a long, scraping slither; I put on the drag hard, and tried to hold up Greytoria's head. The attempt was vain; she turned round and looked at me, and then, without making any farther effort, quite simply sat down in the traces, the chaise resting gracefully on her back.

Mrs. MacGill cried out with terror, and, indeed, I felt ready to do the same. Not a

soul was anywhere in sight. Only far down below us, at the foot of the terrible Widdington hill, could help be procured.

"Oh, Cecilia, this is what comes of trusting you to drive," cried Mrs. MacGill.

This stiffened me up a little, and I determined to unharness Greytoria.

"Come and sit by the roadside," I said. "I 'll get her unharnessed, and once on her legs again there won't be any harm done; it 's not as if she had broken her knees."

"I did n't know that horses *could* sit down," wailed Mrs. MacGill.

"Well, it is an uncommon accomplishment," I admitted, tugging at the harness buckles.

Greytoria turned a mild old eye upon me; she seemed accustomed to the process of being unharnessed, but did not make any attempt to rise.

I thought as I tugged at that buckle that the whole thing was symbolical of life for

me. Was n't I forever tugging at obstinate buckles of one sort or another? I dare say such morbid thoughts should have had no place in my fancy at a moment of practical difficulty, but there are some people made in this way; their thoughts flow on in an undercurrent to events. So I tugged away, and my thoughts worked on also.

It was no easy task, this, of getting Greytoria on her legs again; but I achieved it at last, and she stood up, abject, trembling, with drooping head and bowed knees, regarding the hill before her.

"We must walk down to the inn, I'm afraid, Mrs. MacGill," I said. "I've got Greytoria into the chaise again, but if we add our weight to it, she will just sit down a second time."

"Oh, what a hill to go down on foot!" cried Mrs. MacGill, but she saw that it was inevitable, so we began the long descent, I leading Greytoria, Mrs. MacGill trailing behind. Down below us the green valley smiled

and beckoned us forward, yet like every peaceful oasis, it had to be gained with toil and difficulty. As we plodded down that weary hill, shall I confess that my thoughts turned a little bitterly to Virginia's side of the day's pleasuring? Why should she, young, rich, and beautiful, have the pleasant half of the expedition, — a ride in a motor with a nice young man who was falling in love with her, while I was doomed to trail along with Mrs. MacGill? Why did some women get everything? Surely I needed amusement and relaxation more than Virginia did, but it is n't those who need relaxation who ever get it: "to him that hath shall be given," as the Bible cynically and truly observes.

Every few yards Mrs. MacGill would call out to me to stop: she was getting too tired; it was so cold; the road was so rough. But at last the foot of the hill was gained, and with a sigh of relief she bundled into the chaise again. She had, however, no eyes for

the interest or beauty of the place we had reached with such difficulty. All her faculties, such as they are, were concentrated on wondering where and when we would get some food. As we passed the church, she looked the other way. I was almost glad. I flicked Greytoria, her flagging pace quickened, and attempting a trot, we drove up to the inn door.

"I suppose we must wait for the others," Mrs. MacGill sighed peevishly, "but really after all I have gone through, I feel much in want of food."

"They will soon be here," I said, "and on the way home Greytoria will go better."

"Well, as she goes badly up hill, and won't go down at all, I scarcely see how we are to get home so well," she retorted, with a measure of truth.

As I looked at the hill that we should need to reclimb before we reached home, my heart misgave me too; but just then the motor hove in sight, a scarlet blot at

the top of the hill, and we became interested in watching its descent. How it spun down! Almost before we could believe it possible, it dashed up to the inn door, and Virginia jumped out. She was in exuberant spirits. The drive had been just lovely; she adored Widdington; the hill only gave her delicious creeps; she was n't a bit tired or cold.

"Yes," thought I, "it 's easy to be neither cold nor tired when you are happy and amused and young and rich! Try to drive with Mrs. MacGill when you are feeling ill, and can't afford to buy warm clothes, and see how you like it!"

Mrs. Pomeroy was less enthusiastic, and Sir Archibald was dumbly regarding the tires of the motor, which had suffered strange things.

"Hello," he said, as he glanced up at the window of the inn, "there 's that artist fellow who was at Exeter. Suppose he 's come to 'see the gorse.'"

He nodded up at the window, took out his pipe, and began to fill it, directing Johnson to take the luncheon basket out of the motor.

Then the artist, Mr. Willoughby, came sauntering out of the door. I dare say he had had enough of gorse and solitude, for he seemed glad to greet even a casual acquaintance like Sir Archibald. The position of being the one man in a party of women had palled upon Sir Archibald only too apparently, for he met Mr. Willoughby with — for him — quite unwonted geniality, and they strolled off together down the road. Virginia put her hand through my arm, and drew me in the direction of the church.

"We 're not going on very well this morning, Cecilia," she confided to me. "He 's so Scotch, Sir Archibald is, what they call 'canny,' and I 've made him very cross by dragging him off on this expedition. All the tires of the motor are cut, and he hates

eating out of doors. I can see that I've vexed him to madness."

I laughed, and so did she.

"Why did you make him do it?" I asked.

"I wanted to put him to some sort of test," she replied. "Unless a man will do what he dislikes for you, he is n't worth much."

"I 'm afraid you are going to play with this young man's affections," I said very severely, for her tone was frivolous.

"Am I?" she murmured. "I wonder!"

There was a moment of silence between us. I felt all manner of thrills of interest and sympathy. If you can't be happy yourself, the next best thing is to see other people happy. If, as I now suspected, Virginia was not playing with Sir Archibald's affections, then I was eagerly on her side. Words are not necessary, however, and Virginia must have divined my sympathy.

We had reached the lich-gate, and there,

under the solemn little roof that had sheltered so many a coffin on its way to the grave, Virginia turned and gave me a kiss.

"You dear!" she said. That was all.

VI

Virginia Pomeroy

GREY TOR INN

HERE beginneth the chronicle of the dreadfullest drive that ever was driven. I pitied Sir Archibald with my whole heart to be left behind with Greytoria and me, but what else could be done? There was a mist when we started which degenerated after a bit into an intermittent drizzle, and at intervals the wind blew a young tornado. The road was dreary, but fascinating in its broad stretches of loneliness. We passed green field and brown moor in turn, with all the trees looking grey in the mist, and here and there the brawling of a stream to break the silence. Sometimes there was a woodman working in a roadside copse, sometimes a goggled stone-breaker pursuing his monoto-

nous task, sometimes a carrier bending beneath his weight of fagots. If it had not been for the flaming gorse and the groups of red cattle, there would have been no colour in the landscape. My spirits kept their normal height for the first six or eight miles, but they sank little by little as the hills grew in number and increased in height. Sir Archibald refused to let me walk, and it made me wretched to see him stalking beside the pony chaise, appealing to Greytoria's pride, courage, conscience, ambition, and sense of decency, in turn, and mostly without avail. We kept the best-travelled road, but it seemed to lead us farther and farther from Grey Tor, which had quite disappeared from the horizon and could not be used as a landmark. There could be no conversation either going up or down hill, as Sir Archibald was too breathless and busy. I, sitting in state, punctuated the ascents and descents, as long as I had strength, with agreeable persiflage something in this wise: —

"The guide-book says, 'Pedestrianism is doubtless the ideal manner of touring in Devonshire. Only on foot is it possible to view the more romantic scenery. Motors are not advised and bicycles discouraged.'"

Sir Archibald would smile, say something under his breath, and whack Greytoria.

"Sir Archibald, there is a place in these parts where the devil is said to have died of cold; it must be just here."

"Sir Archibald, do 'e knaw I think we 'm pixy-led? When Devonshire folk miss the path home at night and go astray, they 'm 'pixy-led.'"

If we two poor wayfarers could have sat quietly beside each other and chatted in 'e dimpsey light, it would not have been a bit bad, but there was something eternally doing. When the drag was n't being put on or off, the whip was being agitated, or Sir Archibald was looking for a house to ask the way. Never was there such a route from one spot to another as the one we took from Wid-

dington-in-the-Wolds to the Grey Tor Inn. If it was seven miles as the swallow flies, it was twenty-seven as Greytoria flew. The dinner hour passed, and the luncheon baskets, with all other luggage, were in the motor. Sir Archibald's last information, obtained from an unintelligible boy driving a cow, was to the effect that we were only two miles from home.

"She may manage it and she may not," said my squire, looking savagely at Greytoria. "If I only knew whether she can't or she won't, I should deal with her differently."

The rain now came down in earnest. Part of my mind was forever toiling up or creeping down a hill with the pony, and another part was spent in keeping my umbrella away from Sir Archibald's hat, on those rare occasions when he was by my side. A woman may have the charms of Cleopatra or Helen of Troy, but if she cannot keep her parasol or umbrella away from a man's hat, her doom is sealed.

How I hate this British climate! How I hate to wear always and always stout shoes, sensible clothes, serviceable hats, short skirts, looking like a frump in the intervals of sunshine, that I may be properly attired when it rains! I shed a few secret tears now and then for sheer down-heartedness and discouragement. I was desperately cold, and my wetting had given me a feverish, teeth-chattering sort of feeling. Hungry I was, too, and in such a rage with the beastly pony that I wished she had been eaten in the French Revolution; she was too old to be tender, even then.

Now ensued a brief, all too brief, season of content on a fairly level bit of road. It was not over an eighth of a mile in length, and must have been an accident on the part of Nature. I was so numb and so sleepy that I just heard Sir Archibald's sigh of gratitude as he took his seat for a moment beside me, and then I subsided into a semi-comatose state, too tired to make even one more ex-

piring effort to be agreeable. I am not clear as to the next few moments, in which I felt a sudden sense of warmth and well-being and companionship. I must have dropped off into a sort of dream, and in the dream I felt the merest touch, just the brush of something on my cheek, or I thought I did. Slight as it was there was something unaccustomed about it that made me come hastily into the conscious world, and my waking was made the more speedy by a sudden stir and noise and ejaculation. We had come to another hill, and Sir Archibald had evidently wished for once to omit the walking-up process. Greytoria, outraged in her deepest sensibilities by the unwonted addition of Sir Archibald's weight to her burdens, braced her hind legs firmly and proceeded to achieve the impossible by slithering backward down the hill. Sir Archibald leaped out on the one side; I put the drag on, or off, whichever is wrong, and leaped out on the other.

He adjusted the drag and gave Greytoria

a clip that she will describe to her grandchildren on future winter evenings. I, with matchless presence of mind, got behind the pony chaise and put my shoulder under the back to break its descent. And so we wound wearily up the hill, and on reaching the top, saw the lighted hotel just ahead of us.

In silence we traversed the few remaining yards, each busy with his own thought. Silently we entered the gate and gave Greytoria to the waiting groom. Silently and stiffly I alighted from the chaise, helped by Sir Archibald's supporting arm. He held my hand a second longer than was necessary; held it, half dropped it, and held it again; or did something unusual with it that was widely separated from an ordinary good-night "shake."

There was no harm in that, for the most unsentimental man feels a sort of brotherly sympathy for a damp, cold, hungry, tired, nice girl.

But about that other — episode? . . . Of

course if he did, I should resent it bitterly; but if it were only a dream I must not blame him even in thought. . . . There is always the risk that a man might misunderstand the frank good-fellowship in which we American girls are brought up, and fail to realize that with all our nonsense we draw the line just as heavily, and in precisely the same place as our British cousins. . . . But why do I think about it any more? . . . It would n't be a bit like him, so probably he did n't. . . . In fact it is so entirely out of character that he simply could n't. . . . And yet I suppose the number of men who actually could n't, is comparatively small.

Mrs. MacGill

Well, we spent the day till five o'clock in that dreary spot, cold and wretched. Then Sir Archibald proposed that I should go home with Mrs. Pomeroy in the motor; they said we should get there quicker that way! He meant to drive Miss Pomeroy in the pony chaise, not being at all afraid, he said, of any pony, however spirited. Of course nothing would induce me to enter a pony carriage drawn by that animal again. A motor is more dangerous in some ways, but at any rate it cannot sit down like that pony, and they all assured us that it was both safe and speedy. Mrs. Pomeroy had been quite at ease in it, she said, so at last I consented to go. Cecilia tied on my bonnet with my grey wool shawl, and we set out. It surprises me that motoring should have become a favourite pastime with so-called

fashionable people, for certainly one does not appear to advantage in motoring garments. The cold was intense, and at first everything whizzed past me at such a rate that I could remember nothing except two lines that Cecilia read to me last evening, about "the void car hurled abroad by reinless steeds."

There were no steeds, of course, nor reins, and the car was not void, but that was quite the motion. My bonnet, in spite of the shawl and string, was instantly torn from my head. I begged Johnson, a very civil Scotchman who could understand what I said, to stop the machine for a few moments and let me breathe. Cecilia advised me to remove the bonnet and trust wholly to the shawl. My hair is not thick, especially on the top, and I soon had all the sensation of the head being padded in ice, which we read of as a treatment for brain fever.

It was now beginning to get dark. Johnson drew up suddenly, and declared that he

must have taken the wrong road. There were no sign-posts anywhere, and it had begun to rain heavily. We were standing just at the foot of a steep hill where the road lay through a thick wood. Above us was a tower of rock, — another "tor," I suppose, if not a "monolith."

Johnson proposed to drive the machine on into the wood, and leave us under shelter whilst he went to a cottage that we saw farther up, to inquire about the road. This I decidedly objected to. Mrs. Pomeroy and Cecilia seemed to think me foolish, and could not understand my being afraid.

"But," I said, "I have good reason to refuse to enter that wood. Indeed it will not be safe for Johnson to leave us there alone: I recognize the place perfectly. In one of the books by that Mr. Phillpotts, who, you have all told me, is most accurate in his descriptions, I read about this place, and he said, 'The Wolf suckled her young there yesterday.' Yes, Cecilia, laugh if you

like; those were the very words, and I examined the date of the publication, which was not a year ago. *Yesterday* was the word used."

"Then the cubs will still be too small to attack us," observed Cecilia, who has no tact and is constantly trying to be facetious when she should be endeavouring to allay my nervous terrors.

"He would be meaning foxes, ma'am," said Johnson, who had been listening whilst fright compelled me to quote the exact expression I had read.

"It *is* possible that he meant foxes, Johnson," allowed I, "but three ladies alone in a motor, in the dark, attacked even by wild foxes, would be in some danger; so I hope that you will drive on directly, and get us out of this horrid place as soon as possible."

They tried to smooth over the situation, but I would listen to none of them, and Johnson at last drove on. Halfway up the hill

the motor stuck. Something had gone wrong with it inside, and I felt that we might stay there in the wilderness all night, which would have been impossible, as I had taken very few remedies of any kind with me, and cannot sleep sitting up. These stoppages occurred several times. How we at length got home I scarcely remember. My velvet mantle was like a sponge, my feet so cold that it was all I could do to dismount from the motor when it ground up to the hotel door. There was Sir Archibald standing smoking as if nothing extraordiary had occurred.

"Why, Mrs. MacGill," he cried, "you are even later than we were, and I thought that blessed pony was going to her own funeral."

I thought that in spite of his tone he looked rather pale and agitated; he was of course anxious, and rightly so, about my safety.

"Sir Archibald," I said, as soon as I could speak, "I trust that I never again

may have to enter one of those motors. Human life, especially mine, is too precious to be thrown away in such a fashion. Another half hour of it would have killed me outright. Had Mr. MacGill been alive he would never have consented to my going into it for a moment. As it is, I can scarcely hear or see owing to the frightful noises and the rain lashing on my face; every hair on my head feels pulled the wrong way, and I'm sure I shall have another bad relapse of influenza by to-morrow morning. Your uncle was a friend of my poor brother-in-law who died at Agra in a moment, and unless you take a warning you will have an end quite as sudden and much more frightful, for his was heart complaint, and you will be smashed to pieces by the wheels of that hideous machine."

I left them downstairs and went to bed. Cecilia tried to make me believe there was nothing wrong with me, as she always does when she has neuralgia, or *says* she has neu-

ralgia, herself, but I know that there is. What is the matter I can't exactly say, only I am certain that I am going to suffer in some way from this horrible expedition.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie

THERE is something soothing even in hotel tobacco, I suppose, so I was better, though still feeling decidedly blue, later in the day at Widdington, when I came up to the inn door and began overhauling the motor as it stood in the yard. There was nothing particularly cheering in finding several long cuts in the tires, and I was probing them to get the grit out, when I heard a little cough behind me. I turned to see Miss Virginia standing in the doorway, looking at me rather doubtfully. Now of course I had been rather short, not to say nasty, but somehow it's a fact that you cannot be sharp with a woman without at once being put in the wrong, though she may really have been the sinner all the time. It was Miss. Virginia who had brought me out on this show, who had cost me about forty pounds in tires, and heaven knows how much in other ways, but it was

I who felt a beast now. Yet she looked at me in a way which seemed to say she was sorry I was vexed. She was rubbing her hands together and shivering a little. Of course she was cold in that ridiculous dress.

"A nice day it has turned out, has n't it?" I said rather spitefully.

"Oh, I 'll never, never ask for a picnic again!" cried she, with a comical look. She came and began to look at the cuts in the tires herself.

"Oh, they *are* bad," she exclaimed, "and I suppose you love that old motor better than anything on earth, don't you?" she inquired.

"I get a good deal more pleasure out of it," I truthfully replied, "than I do out of the society of most human beings." She gave a little laugh.

"I expect I had better go inside after that!" she said, and of course I felt rather a brute. I had n't really meant to be rude or send her away. I hunted under the tar-

paulin that covered the motor for my fur-lined coat, and then I followed her into the inn.

"Look here," I said, "better put this on; you 're horribly cold." She seemed half inclined to refuse, but finally let me put the coat over her shoulders and run her arms into the sleeves.

"You 're pretty damp," I observed.

"'Deed I am!" she shivered. "Miss Evesham and I went for a walk and got caught in the rain as usual. My hair 's all wet too!"

"Better dry it," I suggested.

She ran off to some room or other, and when she reappeared she had two plaits of dark hair, as thick as bellropes, hanging down her back. With that and my motor coat, Miss Virginia cut a pretty queer figure. I cannot say she looked plain, however; her spirits had come back, and so had mine, strange to say, for the day was far from finished.

There was a parlour in the inn, so low in

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I CANNOT SAY SHE LOOKED PLAIN, HOWEVER

the ceiling that I could not stand up straight in it, and was forever knocking my head against the rafters. When we went in, this place was as full of women as it could hold, all fighting like cats, — Mrs. MacGill, Mrs. Pomeroy, Miss Evesham, — and all wondering how they were to get home. The place was simply steaming with tea.

Mrs. MacGill, it appeared, utterly refused to go home in the pony trap unless it were driven by me. Needless to say I declined this honour with a firmness equal to hers. Finally it was arranged, chiefly by Miss Evesham's management, that the two old ladies and herself were to go home in the motor with Johnson, while Miss Virginia and I negotiated the pony and trap. This was pretty thick, considering I had refused point-blank to drive Mrs. MacGill, but Miss Evesham seemed to make it sound all right, — clever sort of young woman in her way. As the weather threatened to get worse immediately, the motor party was packed off

without loss of time, and Miss Virginia and I had a comfortable tea by ourselves before starting for home.

It was not late in the afternoon, but the little inn parlour was almost dark, chiefly because the church tower overshadowed the house, and the window was so small. Presently the bells began ringing (it was a saint's day, Miss Virginia said), and my word, what a din they made! The whole house shook and the very teacups rattled. Miss Virginia seemed to like it, however, and sat listening with her chin on her hand. She had been strumming on an old spinet sort of thing that stood in the corner of the room, and I asked her if she would sing a little before we set off.

"I will," said she, "if you 'll smoke a little," an invitation I accepted with alacrity.

"You deserve something," she remarked, "to make up for the wretched time you 've been having to-day. It was partly my fault. I am sorry."

"Oh, don't mention it!" was all I could say, of course, and Miss Virginia began to sing before I could speak another word.

There is a tremendous charm in her singing: her style is so simple; her voice is so fresh; you can hear every word she says, and she always sings the right songs. How this sort of singing makes a man think! I can't describe the effect it has upon me. As Miss Virginia touched the tinny, stringy old notes and went from song to song, — now an Irish melody, now a nigger one, now an English ballad, — I forgot all about the day's worries; I forgot the motor and the cut tires and the bad weather and the beastly picnic — it was a kind of Heaven. If I marry, it must be some one who can sing like this. I have been changing my preferences for blonde women lately. No doubt they look very nice when young, but they don't wear well, I feel sure, and get purple and chilblainy in cold weather. Of course the dark ones are apt to turn drab and mottled, but not when they have as

much colour as Miss Virginia. All sorts of scraps of thoughts and ideas chased each other through my mind as she sang. She had got on to a thing she had sung in the hotel several times, — a plantation Christmas carol she called it, the sort of thing you cannot forget once you have heard it, either the words or the music.

Oh, dat star 's still shinin' dis Chrismus Day,
Rise, O sinner, and foller !
Wid an eye o' faith you c'n see its ray,
Rise, O sinner, and foller !
Leave yo' fader,
Leave yo' mudder,
Leave yo' sister,
Leave yo' brudder,
An' rise, O sinner, and foller !

And there was a bit about a shepherd too : —

Leave yo' sheep, an'
Leave yo' lamb, an'
Leave yo' ewe, an'
Leave yo' ram, an'
Rise up, shepherd, and foller !

I asked her to sing it over again. I had forgotten all about the time and the drive

home and the beastly weather. Luckily I happened to look at my watch. It was nearly six o'clock!

"We 've got to look sharp," I said, "if we want any dinner at the hotel."

Look sharp, indeed! The woman at the inn must have been mad or drunk when she told us that the low road home was only two miles longer than the way we came. We may have missed the right turning, for Miss Virginia was talking and laughing at such a rate when we began the drive, that I confess I had n't much attention to spare. We gradually emerged from the valley where the village lay and were soon on the open moor and fairly lost on it before you could say Jack Robinson.

I never saw such a dismal, howling, God-forsaken country, without a house or a hut or so much as a heap of stones to mark the way, — a wilderness of stubby heath and endless, endless roads, crossing and recrossing in a way that is simply maddening and

perfectly senseless, for they lead to nowhere. We were three mortal hours crawling along on those confounded roads. It rained, of course, and a wind got up, and at the end of that time we were apparently no nearer Grey Tor than when we left Widdington.

Miss Virginia kept up very pluckily for a long time, but she was dead tired and very cold and became more and more silent. It was about the most uncomfortable predicament I ever was in, — and with a girl on my hands, too, a thing I have hitherto always managed to avoid.

And then a thing happened that really I can't account for, and yet I suppose it has changed the whole affair, as far as I am concerned. I feel a perfect beast whenever I think of it, and I hope to goodness Miss Virginia knows nothing about it. We had come to an interminable hill, and I had been walking for about half an hour. Miss Virginia was totally silent now, and suddenly I saw that the reins had slipped from her

hands. She was actually asleep, huddled up in my coat against the back of the chaise. It was beginning to rain again, and the incline being very gentle at that point, I felt I had to get in and hold an umbrella over the girl. I did, and a sudden jerk of the wheels sent her almost into my arms without waking her. Her head was on my shoulder, her cheek so close to mine. Of course I have heard fellows talk about kissing: I have always thought it a disgusting habit myself, and discouraged it, even in near relations. But now — now it seemed suddenly different — she seemed meant to be kissed — and by me — and well, I kissed her — that 's the naked truth, and the moment I had done it I would have given worlds not to have done it, or else to have the right to do it again. A man is a man firstly, I suppose; but secondly, at least, he ought to be a gentleman. That 's the thought that has been spinning in my head all night. Does Virginia suspect? I hope not — and yet I don't know.

We got home, of course, all right in the end, for the hotel turned up quite unexpectedly round a corner, with all the lights shining out across the moor.

N. B. There has been the devil to pay with the motor and the old women.

Cecilia Evesham

I HAVE always had an idea that events need a propelling hand every now and then. Somehow it seemed to me that afternoon at Widdington that Virginia and Sir Archibald were in need of my assistance, and I took the desperate resolution and helped them to the best of my power. This is what I did: I undertook to look after Mrs. MacGill and Mrs. Pomeroy in the motor if Sir Archibald drove Virginia home in the pony chaise; but not content with this, I deliberately sent them round by a road some five miles longer than the one we had come by. I happened to be speaking with the landlady about the roads, and she told me that there was another way back to Grey Tor, only that it was longer. The idea struck me, as the saying goes, "all of a heap."

"Sir Archibald," I said, returning to the parlour, where they all sat, "if you had

seen the business I had to get Greytoria *down* that hill, you would hesitate more about getting her up it. But the landlady here tells us that if you go round by the lower road you avoid the hill, and it is only a little longer."

"I don't believe in country people's distances," he said, "but I 'll inquire."

I turned back, as if by accident, into the bar, and leaned across the counter towards the landlady. She was a genial-looking old woman with a rollicking eye.

"The young people wish to go round by the low road," I said, "but I 'm afraid there may be some difficulties made about it." I hesitated and smiled at her, adding, "It 's not *much* farther, is it?"

"Happen four mile or so, ma'am," she said, looking hard at me.

"Four? As much as that?" I asked.

"Happen three mile, maybe," she corrected; "no, two and a half."

Here Sir Archibald came out to inquire

about the distance. He looked up at the gray skies first, and seemed uncertain.

"How much farther do you call it by the low road to Grey Tor?" he asked.

"Close on two mile, sir," she mumbled shamelessly, and Sir Archibald hesitated no longer.

"Two miles of level are better than half a mile of precipice. I vote for the longer road, Miss Pomeroy," he said, on going back into the parlour.

Virginia nodded and smiled. She was sitting at the old, tinny-sounding spinet, singing the most beautiful little wandering airs that might have been learned in fairyland.

Suddenly she drifted into a plaintive melody we had not heard before, and when we had succumbed to its spell she began singing some words I had found in my dear mother's diary. I had given the verses to Virginia, and she had set them to an air of her own. It is a part of her charm that she

sings sad songs as if she had never felt joy, and gay ones as if she had never known care or sorrow.

'T is I am a lady, now that I 'm old ;
I 'm sheltered from hunger and want and cold,
In a wonderful country that 's rich in gold
(And life to the last is sweet).
Now in the doorway I sit at my ease,
And my son's son he plays at my knees
On little stumbling feet.
But my heart goes back to the days of old,
To a barren country where gorse is gold,
For oh ! it was there that my love was told,
'T was there we used to meet !

They may think I 've forgotten the land forlorn,
In the happy valleys covered with corn ;
They may lay me down with my face to the morn,
A stone at my head and feet ;
But I know that before the break o' the day
My soul will arise and be far away
(For spirits travel fleet), —
Away from the valleys covered with corn,
Back again to the land forlorn,
For oh ! It was there that my Love was born,
'T was there we used to meet ! *

* Mary Findlater.

Sir Archibald, Mr. Willoughby, and I could have listened for an hour, but I felt that it was time to hurry off the elders of the party, so made dark allusions to the weather. These were sufficient to rouse Mrs. MacGill and Mrs. Pomeroy, who were in a semi-comatose condition induced by copious draughts of tea.

We all went to the door of the inn, and Mr. Willoughby came and helped me to my seat in the motor.

"I am coming across to Grey Tor on Saturday," he said. "I have some sketches to take over that way. Shall you still be at the inn?"

"Probably," I answered evasively.

"I hope so," said he; "perhaps we may have another talk such as we have had this afternoon."

"Who knows? Talk is a fugitive pleasure," I replied. "Some days it will be good and others it can't be captured at any price."

"I'll come in the chance of catching

some," he whispered. And at this moment Mrs. MacGill interrupted us and insisted that I should tie on her shawl. The homeward drive was begun, but it would be too long a story to describe its miseries. Imagination must do its work here.

VII

Virginia Pomeroy

I woke this morning neither rested nor refreshed. I was determined not to stay in bed, for I wanted to show Sir Archibald by my calm and natural demeanour that I was unconscious of anything embarrassing in our relations. For that matter I am not sure that there is. I wore my pink linen, and looked paler instead of gayer, as I intended. Breakfast was quiet, though mamma had borne the picnic wonderfully and Miss Evesham was brighter than usual. Sir Archibald was baffling. He met my eye as seldom as possible, but I am glad to say, though he was absent-minded, he was not grumpy. Why do I care whether he is grumpy or not? Why do I like to see him come out sunny and warm and genial, and relax his severe face into an unexpected laugh? And

why do I feel pleased when he melts under my particular coaxing? I have deliberately tried to disparage him to myself and compare him with other men, especially with Breck Calhoun, always to his disadvantage. He is not a bit handsomer than Breck, though mere beauty after all counts for almost nothing in a man. He has n't, on the whole, as good manners as Breck, and does n't begin to understand me as well. He is an ordinary, straight, simple, intelligent but not intellectual Anglo-Saxon. I have assured myself of this dozens of times, and having treated him as a kind of snow image, merely for the satisfaction of throwing disparaging epithets at him, and demolishing his outline, I look at him next morning only to find that he has put himself together again and made himself, somehow, into the semblance of the man I love.

There are plenty of men who can manage their own moods, without a woman's kind offices, so why should I bother about his?

If it were Breck Calhoun, now, he would be bothering about mine! It is just the time of year when dear old Breck makes the annual offer of his heart and hand — more, as he says, as a matter of habit than anything else, and simply to remind me that there is an excellent husband waiting for me at home when I cease running after strange hearts. That is his expression.

I think some of the marriages between persons of different nationality must come off because of the fascination and mystery that each has for the other, — the same sort of fascination, but a still stronger one, that is exerted by an opposite temperament. In the friendship of a man of Sir Archibald's type I feel a sense of being steadied and strengthened, simplified and balanced. And there ought to be something in the vivacity of the American girl — the result of climate and circumstances and condition, I suppose — which should enliven and stimulate these graver "children of the mist." The feeling

I have lately had for Archibald Mackenzie (he would frown if he could hear me leave out the Maxwell and the Kindarroch) is just the basis I need for love, but my liking would never go so far as that, unless it were compelled by a still stronger feeling on the man's part. I am not going to do any of the wooing, that is certain. If a man chose to give me his very best I would try to deserve it and keep it and cherish it, but I have no desire to fan his inward fires beforehand. After he is once kindled, if he has n't heat enough to burn of his own free will, then let him go out! Sir Archibald is afraid of himself and afraid of love. Well, he need not worry about me! I might like to see the delightfully incongruous spectacle of a man of his type honestly and heartily in love, and (in passing) it would be of inestimable benefit to his character; but I want no panic-stricken lovers in my company. Have n't I enough fears of my own, about wet climates and cold houses and monarchical

governments and tin bath-tubs and porridge and my mother's preference for American husbands? But I should despise myself if I did n't feel capable of throwing all these, and more, overboard if the right time ever comes.

. . . . . .

I have n't been downstairs either to luncheon or tea, but I looked from mamma's window and chanced to see Johnson putting Sir Archibald's portmanteau into the motor. I thought this morning that he intended to run away. And that is the stuff they make soldiers of in Scotland! Afraid of love! Fie! Sir Archibald!

I cannot succeed in feeling like the "maiden all forlorn." It impresses me somehow that he has gone away to think it over. Well, that is reasonable; I don't suppose to a man of Sir Archibald's temperament two weeks seems an extreme length of time in which to choose a wife; and as I need considerable reflection on my part I 'll

go away too, presently, and take mamma to Torquay, as was our original intention. Torquay is relaxing, and I think I have been a trifle too much stimulated by this bracing moorland air. I hope for his own comfort that Sir Archibald will do his thinking in a warmer clime; and when (or if) he returns to acquaint Virginia with the result of his meditations, he will learn that she also is thinking — but in a place unknown!

Mrs. MacGill

It is just as I feared. The trouble is in my right knee, so stiff that I can scarcely bend it, and exceedingly painful. Cecilia calls it "a touch of rheumatism."

"Indeed," I said, "it 's a pretty secure grasp, not a touch; were I what is called a *danseuse*, my livelihood would be gone, but mercifully I don't need to dance."

Cecilia laughed; she thinks nothing of any illness but neuralgia.

"We must leave this place very soon," said I, "and return to Tunbridge Wells; life here is fit only for cannibals."

In the morning it was impossible for me to come down to breakfast, but with great difficulty I dragged myself downstairs about eleven. I felt it my duty to the son of an old friend to seek an opportunity for quietly speaking my mind to Sir Archibald about

Miss Pomeroy, so decided to do it at once. I found them together, as usual, in the coffee-room. The girl was looking pale; she is beginning to be afraid that her arts are in vain.

Sir Archibald was standing beside her, looking very much bored. She made some excuse, and left the room soon after I had come in.

"I hope you are not the worse of your adventure in the motor, Mrs. MacGill," Sir Archibald began.

"Thank you," said I, sitting down close to him. "I am, a good deal. My right knee is excessively painful, and I have a very strange buzzing in the head."

"Ah, you are not accustomed to the motor; it 's all habit."

"I am *not* accustomed to a motor, Sir Archibald," said I, "nor am I accustomed to the ways of young women nowadays, — *young ladies* we used to be called when I was a girl, but I feel that the phrase is quite

inapplicable to a person like Miss Pomeroy."

"'Young woman' is better, perhaps," he said, I thought with a smile.

"No lady," I continued, "when *I* was young, would talk like that or act like that. 'A sweet face shrinking under a cottage bonnet' (as Mr. MacGill used to say) is better than any tulip."

Sir Archibald smiled again, and seemed about to leave the room, but I asked him to be so good as to hold a skein of wool for me. I had brought down my knitting, so he sat down to hold it, looking rather annoyed.

I continued firmly, "There is a freedom — I should almost say a license — about American women and their ways" —

"You have dropped your ball," he said; and when he had returned it to me, he began to try to change the subject by remarking about the weather.

"It is," I said, "extremely cold, as it has always been ever since I came here, but, as

I was saying, there is something about Miss Pomeroy's singing"—

Here he bent his head so low that I was unable to see his face, and stretched my wool so tight that I fear my next socks will be spoiled; it was three-ply merino, and very soft.

"She sings," I went on without taking any notice of the wool, "in a way that I feel sure poor Mr. MacGill would have considered indecorous. I was a musician myself as a girl, and used to sing with much expression. 'She wore a Wreath of Roses' was a great favourite. I always expected to be asked to repeat it. I remember on one occasion when I came to—

> A sombre widow's cap adorns
> Her once luxuriant hair,

a gentleman who stood by the piano—he was a widower—was obliged to turn away. But that was quite a different matter from the kind of expression that Miss Pomeroy puts into things. It's not proper. I must

speak plainly to you, and say it is almost passionate, though I dislike to use the word.

> When I am dead, my dearest —

Are these words for the drawing-room? You are pulling my skein rather tight, Sir Archibald. It stretches so easily, and these light wools require such care.

> And dreaming through the twilight,
> Haply I may remember, and haply may forget.

Remember *what?* forget *what?* The inquiry rises unbidden. Just ask yourself if these are words for the lips of any young woman — far less a young *lady*."

Here Sir Archibald coughed so violently that he had to let go my wool (which got all tangled) and stand up.

"Excuse me," he interrupted, "but I have promised to speak with Johnson about something" —

"I won't detain you more than a minute," I interrupted, "only just to say a word of warning to the son of an old friend. For-

eigners who speak our own language are the worst of all. Oh, Sir Archibald, your grandmother was Scotch, your mother was Scotch before you were born, and all your good aunts too. I must warn you that if you let this American girl, this Miss Pomeroy, succeed in her attempt" —

"Mrs. MacGill," he exclaimed, "I cannot allow you to use Miss Pomeroy's name to me in this way."

"Very well," said I, "but if you do not take my advice and beware, Miss Pomeroy will have no name to mention, for she will be Lady Maxwell Mackenzie, and you will be a miserable man with an American wife."

He muttered something, I could n't say what; the word "Jove" was mentioned, and there was some allusion to "an old cat." I failed to see the connection, for no one could call Miss Pomeroy "old," whatever she is; then without a word of apology he left the room. Young men, even baronets, have no manners nowadays. Mr. MacGill's were

courtly ; he never used one word where two would do, and bowed frequently to every lady, often apologizing most profusely when there was no occasion for it.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie

CARLETON HOTEL, LONDON

I CAME down late, the morning after that drive, having spent a bad night. In spite of the fact that Johnson had been out with the motor and the old ladies till nearly midnight, I never thought of going down to look at the car. It had lost interest in a way I did n't like. To tell the truth, I was thinking of nothing at all except of that girl. I had made up my mind that this was not to be endured. Since I kissed her — it is awful to confess it — I have wished for nothing so much as to kiss her again, and before I become the sort of blithering idiot that a man is when in love, I must and shall be off. It is not the girl I funk; she is a nice girl; I never wish to see a nicer, and I know I never shall. It is the feeling I am beginning to have about her. When she is not there I feel as

if something necessary to my existence were wanting, — as if I had come off without a pocket-handkerchief or gone out in a top-hat and frock-coat without an umbrella on a showery day in town. When a man gets to feel this about another human being it is time he was off. I have sent orders to Johnson to be ready to start at any moment.

I wish I had not seen Miss Virginia, though, before going. She looked so pale and done up. Mrs. MacGill came into the room before I had time to speak to her, even to tell her I was going away, though I somehow think she guessed it. As to that old frump, that harpy in black velvet and beads, Mrs. MacGill, I will not write down the things she elected to say to me about Virginia, when she had got me tied to her apron string with her confounded skein of wool. I wish I had chucked it in her face and told her to go to the devil. If I 'd had the spirit of half a man, I would have done it, and gone straight to Virginia.

Virginia! This gave me a feeling about her that I can't describe, — much, much worse than the handkerchief-and-umbrella feeling, — a feeling that seemed to tweak and pull at something inside me that I had never been conscious of before. But I had an obstinate fit on, that I 'm subject to, like other men, I suppose. I had said I would go, and I have gone, leaving a card of good-by for the Pomeroys, and making straight for town.

. . . . . .

It is no use; for after a few days of struggle and doubt and misery, I have got to go back to that girl — if I can find her. What a wretched time I have had! If this is being in love I hope it won't last. I 'm told it does n't usually, after marriage. Perhaps it settles down into something more comfortable, that does not interfere with a man's meals or destroy his sleep. It is awful to think that your whole life may or may not be changed, according to the fancy of a

girl whose existence you weren't aware of a fortnight ago! I have told Johnson we are going straight back to Dartmoor, and he grinned — the wretch! Of course he knows why.

Cecilia Evesham

GREY TOR INN
Thursday morning

ENDED the Dartmoor drama! Gone Sir Archibald! Vanished the motor! Gone too, dear Virginia and Mrs. Pomeroy! only Mrs. MacGill and I are left! He went on Wednesday, the Pomeroys on Thursday, and I now await events. Virginia tells me she has taken her mother to Torquay, but that is a wide word!

Saturday

I thought it would be so: a week without her was enough. Yesterday Sir Archibald, or what used to be Sir Archibald, appeared at the inn again.

But what a change was here! Shall I put down our conversation without comment?

Cecilia: So you have come back, Sir Archibald?

Sir A.: Yes.

Cecilia: I hope you had a pleasant run to town, or wherever you went.

Sir A.: Beastly.

Cecilia: What? Did the motor break down, or the weather?

Sir A.: Neither.

Cecilia: What was wrong, then?

Sir A.: Everything. (Then suddenly) Where have the Pomeroys gone to, Miss Evesham?

Cecilia: To Torquay, I understand.

Sir A.: Do you know their address?

Cecilia: I do not. I suppose they will be at one of the hotels.

Sir A.: You are making fun of me. Tell me where they are. I am in earnest.

Cecilia: So am I. I do not know their address.

He started up, wrung my hand without a word, and hurried out of the room. I looked after him in the hall, but he was so intent on the Torquay guide that he never noticed me.

He steamed off Torquay-wards half an hour later.

I have had a pleasant chat with Mr. Willoughby, who appeared this afternoon. He looks at life and all things much as I do. He is a distinct relief from Mrs. MacGill, a distinct relief; and though he has made no special reputation as yet, he is bound to succeed, for he has decided talent.

VIII

Mrs. MacGill

My words have taken effect; it is often disagreeable to have to give unasked advice, but one should always do it. Sir Archibald has gone. It is a pleasant thought that any simple words of mine may have been the means of saving the young man from that designing person.

She conceals her disappointment as well as she can, and is doing her best to look as if nothing had happened in one way or another; but I can see below the surface of that new hat. She has taken her mother off to Torquay for a few days. It is a large town seemingly, though I have heard that there are no men there; but as the guide-book says the population is twenty-five thousand, that is probably an exaggeration. However, Miss Pomeroy won't stay long in Torquay in that

case, but will return to New York, where she would fain make us believe they are as plentiful as in a harem. They cannot all be millionaires at least, for she says that many American writers live on what they make by their books.

Cecilia would like to stay on here, I think. She has been up to the top of a quarry looking at gorse along with that so-called artist, Mr. Willoughby.

Miss Pomeroy has infected her, I am afraid, and the bad example is telling, even at that age.

. . . . . .

We have had several nice quiet days here alone since the Pomeroys left. There has scarcely been a sound in the hotel, except when the wind pounces upon the window frames in the sudden annoying way that it has here. Twice I have got up, to endeavour to fasten the window, and each time have lost a toothbrush. It shakes my nerves completely when the windows clatter suddenly

through the night. Yesterday as we sat in the dining-room I heard a crunching noise.

"Can that be another motor?" I exclaimed. "I hope not. It is a class of people I do not wish to associate with any further."

"It is a motor," called Cecilia, who sat next the window. "A scarlet motor, too."

In another moment the door opened, and Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie came in.

"Dear me, Sir Archibald," said I, "what has brought you back again so soon? You will have a nice quiet time here now, for we are the only people in the hotel."

He seemed strangely put out and unlike himself, and passed my chair without even replying to my speech. I could see that he was thoroughly unnerved, very much in the same state that I was when we came back from that terrible drive. It is no wonder; motoring must tell on the strongest nerves in time.

Later in the day Cecilia came in smiling.

"Sir Archibald has gone away again," she said. "He has not made a long stay this time!"

"No," I observed, "that sort of nervous excitement grows on people. I know myself that if I once begin to get excited over a bazaar, for instance, I get off my sleep, and worn out in no time. I suppose he has rushed off farther into the moor."

"He has gone to Torquay," remarked Cecilia, "quite an easy run from here."

I was much annoyed. It seemed probable that he would meet Miss Pomeroy again there, though possible that among twenty-five thousand women he might fail to recognize her. I think Cecilia and I must take a day or two at Torquay on our way home. It would soothe me after this mountain air and the desolation of Grey Tor, and I could get some fresh bead trimming for my velvet mantle, which has been much destroyed by all that I have come through in this place. Our packing will be very easily done. Poor

Mr. MacGill used always to say, in his playful manner, that he could stand anything except a woman's luggage, which is the reason that I always try to travel with as little as possible. So there will be only our two large boxes and the holdall and my black bag and the split cane basket and the Holland umbrella-case, with two straps of rugs and the small brown box, and the two hat boxes, and a basket with some food. Miss Pomeroy's boxes were like arks. I'm sure if she succeeds in her design, I pity the man that has to take them back to Scotland; they would never go in the motor. I think Greytoria and the pony chaise will manage all our little things quite nicely. She seems the quietest animal in the stables, so I must just trust myself in it once more.

There goes Cecilia again, walking on the gravel at the door with that Mr. Willoughby. We must certainly leave to-morrow morning.

One affair such as that of Miss Pomeroy

and Sir Archibald is enough for me to endure without being witness of another.

One would suppose common modesty would prevent a young gentleman and lady from indulging in a love-affair whilst inhabiting an ordinary country inn; but there is no limit to the boldness of these Americans. I sometimes think it is a pity that they were discovered, for they have been a bad example to more retiring and respectable nations.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie

TORQUAY

THAT dreary week of uncertainty in London seemed more foolish than ever, when Johnson and I struck the familiar road from Stoke Babbage to the moor. What a silly ass I was, I thought, to kick my heels at the Carleton all those tiresome days when I might have been with Virginia!

It all looked exactly the same as we came up the hill from the little town, — the bare walls of the hotel, Grey Tor with a row of tourists on the top, moor ponies feeding all over the place, with their tiny foals running after them. It was a lovely, cloudless day, with "blue distances" enough to please all the artists in creation, and the hot air quivered over the heath as I've seen it do at home on an August afternoon. I seemed to hear Virginia's voice already, to see her

standing on the step in one of her pretty new frocks, and my spirits went up with a bound. But when I got to the door there was no one there. I went into the dining-room; the tables were changed; the one at which we all used to sit together in the window was pushed into the middle of the room. At a small table on the side were seated Mrs. MacGill and Miss Evesham, while the Exeter artist was at another one not far off. Miss Evesham and he seemed to be having a pretty lively conversation, while Mrs. MacGill looked thoroughly out of it and decidedly sulky.

"What!" cried Miss Evesham, seeing me, "You are back, Sir Archibald! Had London no attractions?"

"I hate town in the heat," I replied.

Of course I wanted to ask where the Pomeroys were, but could n't bring myself to do it, — especially before Mrs. MacGill. I had pointedly ignored her, and had every intention of continuing to do so. After lunch, at

the bureau, I found that the Pomeroys had left some days ago. I could n't bring myself to ask for their address, with about a dozen people listening, so I had to hang about and wait for a chance of seeing Miss Evesham alone. It was after dinner before I got it. I could see that she was laughing at me, under the rose — confound her impudence! — and that she seemed to take a kind of pleasure in keeping me waiting. She and the artist chap appeared to be as thick as thieves, but at last she sent him off and began teasing me in her quiet way.

"Are you a good sailor, Sir Archibald?" she asked irrelevantly.

"Not particularly. Why?" was my reply.

"The Atlantic is a wide ocean, and generally very rough, I have heard," said she, with a queer look at my face.

"Oh!" cried I involuntarily. "Have they crossed?"

She burst out laughing.

"You 're fairly caught!" she said. "Am I supposed to know who 'they' are?"

Then of course I had to let on. I could see Miss Evesham knew all about it, though she did not say much, being more inclined to laugh; I 'm sure I don't know why. The Pomeroys had gone to Torquay, but she either could not or would not tell me their address, or how long they were going to stay, or where they were going next.

"Torquay is a big place," I said, discouraged, "all hotels and lodgings. How the deuce shall I find them?"

"Oh," she replied coolly, "people generally find what they want very much — if they are really in earnest."

With that she nodded me good-night, still laughing. I did not see her again, for of course I made an early morning start for Torquay next day.

And the devil of a hunt I had, when I got there! What silly idiots women are! (Of course I mean Miss Evesham.) There are

about one hundred hotels, three hundred boarding-houses, and one thousand furnished apartments in Torquay, and search as I might, I could not find the Pomeroys' name on any of their lists, or discover a trace of them anywhere. It was a broiling hot day, the sun beat down without mercy, and the glare beat up from the beastly white roads and pavements till I was nearly blind. I was never so nearly used up in my life as at the end of that day, and it was not only with bodily fatigue, but with utter and most cruel disappointment; for I was convinced that the Pomeroys had left Torquay, and that, like an utter fool, I had missed my only chance of being happy with a woman.

At last between six and seven of the evening, I found myself sitting on the edge of a little sort of wood, below a garden overhanging the sea. The trees were cut away, here and there, to show the view, and to the right you looked along the coast and saw some red rocks and a green headland

jutting out into the water. It was sunset; I was watching a little yawl in full sail slipping round the headland, and when it was out of sight, I looked at the headland itself. There was one figure on the piece of green downs at the top, — a tall, slight figure, a woman's, all in white, with a red parasol.

My heart jumped into my throat. I knew it was Virginia. There was a piece of white scarf or veil floating out behind her as she walked, and there is no woman in the world but Virginia who stands like that or wears a scarf like that! — Oh! Virginia, so dear and so distant, how, how could I reach her, not having the wings of a bird? Long before I could get there she would be gone, — lost again in that howling wilderness of hotels and lodging-houses.

A man came along the path where I was standing.

"How do you get to that place?" I inquired, pointing to the headland, "and what is it called?"

"It 's called Daddy Hole Plain," said the man, "and you get there by the road. I can't direct you from here; you must inquire as you go along."

"Is there no short cut?" I inquired impatiently.

"Not unless you can swim or fly!" said the man, with a grin.

I never wished before to be a bird or a fish; mere feet seemed a most inadequate means of getting me to Virginia. But I set off, very nearly at a run. The wrong turns that I took, the hills that I went up, the hills that I went down, the people that I asked, the wrong directions they gave me, — they seemed quite innumerable. Daddy Hole Plain was about as difficult to get to as Heaven, and when I got there the angel would be flown!

But she was n't. . . . For when at last I saw before me the bit of green downs with the seats facing the bay, the white figure was there. Virginia was sitting looking out

to sea where the sun was setting, making a red path on the water, and the white-sailed yawl was drifting to the west! . . . I was so hot and tired, so travel-stained and dusty! Virginia looked so cool and sweet! . . . To see her there after all my wandering and disappointment was too much. . . . I could not speak. She heard my step, looked up and saw me coming — looked glad, I think. . . . Her little feet were crossed in front of her upon the turf, and I just flung myself beside them, and something — so like a lump of ice, that I had always carried in my breast until I saw Virginia — melted entirely at that moment, and began to beat.

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SOMETHING IN MY BREAST MELTED ENTIRELY AT THAT MOMENT

Virginia Pomeroy

Torquay, South Devon
Bella Vista Hotel
June, 19—

If he had come the next day, or even the same week, he would have had a cold welcome, for on the whole I did not understand, nor did I fancy, his methods.

But I had had time to think, time to talk it over with mamma, time to write Breck Calhoun that there was no use in our discussing the old subject, for I feared, though I was not absolutely sure, that there was "some one else." Always dear old Breck has finished by saying, "Jinny, there is no one else?" And there never was till now.

Now there is not only some one else, but there is also in very truth "no one else" who counts! All is absolutely different from, and yet precisely like, everything that I have imagined ever since the foundation of the

earth. In love, he is, what all good men and good women ought to be, something quite unlike his former self, or the outer self he shows to the world. He has lost himself and found himself again in me, and I have gone through the same mysterious operation. He has place for no troublesome uncertainty of mind now, although mamma and I have decreed a year of waiting in which we shall have ample time to change if we choose. But we shall not choose; we were made for each other, as we have both known ever since the day we had luncheon together at The Mug o' Cider in Little Widger.

What chapters, what books, we talked sitting in the gorse bushes on Daddy Hole Plain! In the evening of my days I shall doubtless be glad that I climbed those heights, remembering that Archibald had to exert himself somewhat arduously in order to ask me to marry him. I wanted to be alone and feast my eyes on the dazzling blue of the sea, one broad expanse of sapphire,

stretching off, off, into eternity; a blue all be-diamonded with sunlit sparkles; a blue touched with foam-flecks wherever it broke on the rocks or the islets. Granted that any view has charms when one is young and in love, the view from Daddy Hole Plain would inspire an octogenarian, or even a misogynist.

"It was in Exeter we really met, you remember?" I reminded Archibald.

"I am not likely to forget it."

"Do you chance to know the motto that your virgin queen, Elizabeth, bestowed upon Exeter? It was *Semper fidelis*."

"That 's a good omen, is n't it," he said. "You always do find out the cleverest things, Virginia! How am I ever to keep up with you?"

"Don't try!" I answered, quite too happy to be anything but vainglorious. "Gaze at me on my superior intellectual height, and when I meet your admiring eyes you can trust me to remember that though you are voluntarily standing on a step below, your

head is higher than mine after all! Archibald, do you know what I am to give you for a wedding present?"

"No," he answered gravely; "is it your mother?"

"No, I am going to lend mamma to Miss Evesham for a little, until her turn comes, — dear old Cecilia!"

"Do you think it will ever come?"

"It 's only just round the corner; Cupid is even now sharpening his arrows and painting little pictures on the shafts."

"Oh, I see! Well, is it Greytoria? for I don't mind saying that I 'm quite ready to give her a stall in my stables at Kindarroch; though of all the ill-conducted and lazy little brutes" —

"Be careful, Archibald," I exclaimed warningly, "you owe some few hours of martyrdom, but many a debt of gratitude, to that same Greytoria."

"I remember only one," he said, looking at me in a very embarrassing way, "and by

George, she cut that one short! But I give it up — the wedding present; I can't guess, and I don't care specially, so long as you come along with it."

"I shall come with it, and in it, if the faithful Johnson will steer me, — it's going to be a new motor!"

"Well, you owe it to me, Virginia!" he cried with enthusiasm, "for mine is n't worth a brass farthing at this moment. I knew before I had been at Grey Tor twenty-four hours that it was going to be knocked into smithereens, but I had n't the pluck to take it or myself out of harm's way. Now we are both done for!"

"Which do you prefer?" I asked, "your old motor or me?"

"You, with a new one," he answered unblushingly. "We 'll take our wedding journey in it, shall we? Early this autumn would be a good time."

"And mamma and Cecilia and Mrs. MacGill can follow behind with Greytoria."

"I don't mind their trying to follow," Archibald responded genially, as he lighted his pipe, "so long as they never catch up; and they never will — not with that little brute!"

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